

I am Joel Remme. I have been involved with this group since February 2011. The group's purpose is to help individuals obtain needed medical equipment that they are unable to afford or are unable to get through their insurance. This medical equipment is needed to help these individuals be more functional and safe in their homes and in the community. I have a particular interest in this mission because of the experiences I've been through, and know that there is a better way to help individuals with medical equipment needs than exists today.

In October 2008 I was walking. I would be just like anyone else at this table and not in a power wheel chair. I had a foot surgery that I thought would get me back to running. I had been a runner for 30 years. Running was part of my spirituality.

The foot surgery was not successful. My disability progressed rapidly. By May of 2010 I've needed the power wheel chair you see me in today. I can't take one step without a mobility device or someone assisting me.

I'd like to share some of my journey with you as it relates to medical equipment. I was fitted with a brace in July 2009 and used a cane to walk short distances. In September 2009 I started using a walker for more stability and safety. The cane and walker became the first pieces in my museum of rehab equipment otherwise known as the third stall in our three car garage.

In November 2009 I had a bad fall outside my home. I had an electric scooter on order. I received the scooter in January 2010. I used a combination of the scooter and a manual wheel chair to get around. My disability progressed. I fell in my house in March 2010 and fell from my scooter in April. I was hospitalized also in April because of that fall, and left with a hospital bed.

The scooter is now also a part of the equipment museum. In May 2010 my wife, who is a physical therapist, and I identified that I would need a power wheel chair because the scooter was too unstable for my condition. I have used a power wheel chair since then. It was extremely difficult getting this power wheelchair since I had just received the scooter a few months before. However, because of my progressing condition, the scooter was no longer appropriate. We did not anticipate that my condition would progress so rapidly, and that I would be needing something more than the scooter so soon. After several letters justifying my medical needs for this power wheelchair from my wife, my neurologist and primary care physician, I finally got the power wheelchair.

When I no longer could use the scooter, friends encouraged me to sell it. For whatever reason I didn't sell it. It sat in my garage for over two years. The scooter is almost new since I only used it for a few months.

To recap I went from corrective foot surgery in October 2008 to requiring the power wheelchair I need today by May of 2010. The equipment allows me to stay in my house, to move within my home, and to participate in a few activities in the community such as swimming at an adapted pool. Without this

equipment I would not be functional or able to live somewhat independently. Appropriate equipment has allowed me to be safe.

As for the equipment in my garage, it still sits there. It would seem that it could be better used by someone who could use it to make their lives better, safer, and more functional. I have no use for it. If it could help someone else improve their lives, that is what I would like to see happen. That is why I feel so strongly that House Bill 2137 should be approved.