

From the Office of Sen Floyd Prozaniski

Dear Senator Beyer,

I am from a Springfield family and am writing to you today to ask for your support of HB 2014. My name is Isabelle Norton and I am 15 years old. I was 2 years old when I was run over by my father on his John Deere riding mower and my leg was ripped from my body. The sheriff's deputy who responded to the accident said "there were too many pieces of flesh and bone" scattered across the yard but he was able to find 3 of my toes and my left foot. Unfortunately, that didn't matter. The doctors had to amputate my leg, and my life, from age 2 on, would never be the same.

You see, Senator Beyer, I have learned a lot going through the legal process for going on 13 years now. Since 2004, there have been hundreds of children injured by riding lawnmowers. 70% of those cases we kids like me---under the age of 5! Deere has known for years their lawn mowers are faulty. There are blind spots for drivers, no guards to protect children from the blades, and little kids are the ones getting run over or killed. Little kids just like me.

Until my case, no one had successfully held Deere accountable for their faulty design. Virtually no lawyer wanted to take my case and I will be forever grateful to my attorneys for taking on my fight and risking so much for me. Deere is a very powerful company, represented by some of the largest law firms in the country and the state, and it was going to take a lot of money and time to win. They fought us at every turn. It's taken hard working attorneys (three law firms now, because of all the appeals) 13 years, 2 trials, and 4 appeals to get us where we are today. I don't even know how much of their own money they had to spend or borrow to get us through all of this, but I have to imagine it was a lot. And the appeals keep coming.

A Lane County jury heard the facts of my case, determined how much economic loss I will have over my lifetime, and factored in how much my life has changed forever, including the emotional harms, the pain, and the quality of my life (non-economic damages). They assessed my lifetime losses at \$12.5 million total and said Deere was responsible for 78% of that. That money is going to make a huge difference in my life. And HB 2014 will allow my case, the decision of my jury, to stand. Without it, the decision of the jury on my case will be rolled back because of a vote you are casting tomorrow.

Senator Beyer, I am not a complainer. I don't want you or anyone else to feel sorry for me. I hate when people treat me like I am disabled or can't do things I can do. I push myself to levels many people rather I not be trying to achieve. I don't want to be treated differently than other kids my age. But at the end of the day, I can't run or turn suddenly. I am less safe and less stable on my feet than you are because I am missing a leg. That leads to all sorts of challenges and problems. Because I was injured when I was so young and my bones were still growing, my spine is twisted, one of my hip joints has been worn down like that of a senior citizen, and I face a future of multiple orthopedic surgeries on my key joints---no telling how many or when.

My life has been forever changed. No matter how hard I try, there are certain things I will never be able to do. And pain is my constant companion. Every day, since I was 2 years old, I deal with pain. Sometimes it really is unbearable but I know I must push through it because tomorrow it might not be as bad.

Please stand up for survivors like me. Please let my jury decision stand.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Norton

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