

SB 549 & SB 550: Increasing access to repairs for wheelchairs and other mobility devices

The problem: Waiting too long for fixes

- Oregon residents living with physical and medical disabilities, seniors, and children with developmental disabilities rely on powered wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Even small repairs can take **weeks or months to complete**.
- **Repairs are critical**, because, for example, Medicare and most insurance companies will replace complex wheelchairs only every five years
- **It is a health issue**. Being confined to their bed, due to a device being out of service, can lead to pressure injuries and other problems, in addition to the inability to take care of basic needs.
- **It is a quality-of-life issue**. Wheelchairs, particularly power ones, and other mobility devices are an extension of the user, providing mobility, autonomy, and freedom.
- Many of the **repairs are simple**, like changing a tire, but are vital for the device to work and be adjusted correctly.

The solution: Removing barriers to repair

- **Right to repair is popular with users**. In a recent report – Stranded – US PIRG, found that 83% of wheelchair users who responded to a survey said that a right to repair law would “make life easier.”
- **Reduce wait times**. Waiting for approval from Medicaid before getting a chair fixed can add weeks or even months to the amount of time it takes to get a mobility device fixed.
- **Colorado (HB1011, 2022) and California (SB1384, 2024)** have passed right to repair laws that address power wheelchairs and similar devices.

What the bills would do

- SB 550 would expand Oregon’s current right to repair law to require manufacturers to provide necessary resources – from parts and tools to embedded software and essential documentation – to both wheelchair owners and independent repair providers.
- SB 549 would allow users of complex rehabilitation technology to get their chairs and other mobility devices fixed by a technician without having to wait for prior authorization from Medicaid.

Trusted organizations support these bills which would ensure that individuals have uninterrupted access to their primary means of mobility.

