

April 22, 2025

Chair Sosa and Members of the Committee:

Thanks for the opportunity to provide comment on SB550. I am the Executive Director of ALS Northwest, a non-profit which provides individualized support to People Living with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and their families throughout Oregon and SW Washington, at no cost to them.

ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative condition, and nearly all the individuals we support will eventually require complex power wheelchairs, some of which can cost as much as a new car. Our role includes providing individuals with the resources and tools they need to navigate life with this diagnosis. This includes helping them access critical equipment that supports independence and quality of life, such as assistive technology and durable medical equipment.

Complex power mobility isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. It enables individuals living with ALS to stay active, safe, and engaged in daily life. Power wheelchairs are prescribed and customized under the guidance of healthcare professionals to meet each person's unique and evolving needs. These chairs must be carefully fitted and adjusted to avoid causing harm to the user or damage to the equipment itself.

We support the concept of "right to repair" for aspects of power wheelchairs that individuals with a reasonable level of skill can safely manage on their own. Timely repairs are critical, and allowing individuals to address certain issues independently could help prevent unnecessary harm and improve quality of life. However, we have concerns about the current language of the bill. More technical and skilled repairs should be handled by those with specialized training and under the guidance of a medical provider, physical therapist, occupational therapist, or assistive technology professional. Attempting to fix intricate components without proper expertise could unintentionally lead to serious harm or compromise the safety of the device.

We urge the committee to adopt the Dash-2 amendment, which would appropriately narrow the scope of the bill to maintain safety yet makes clear consumers' right to repair elements of power wheelchairs that easily are within the skillset of a layperson. Our understanding is that similar language has been adopted in other states, notably California.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Cassy Adams
Executive Director
ALS Northwest
Cassy.adams@alsnorthwest.org