Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid COALITION

January 27, 2026

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

The Honorable Jim Banks
United States Senate
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: ITEM Coalition Support for S. 3138, the Veterans SPORT Act

Dear Senators Banks and King:

The undersigned members of the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) Coalition write to express our support for S. 3138, the *Veterans Supporting Prosthetics Opportunities and Recreational Therapy ("SPORT") Act*, which would provide coverage under the Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") benefit for prosthetic limbs that veterans with limb loss use to participate in physical activities in order to remain fit, healthy, and as functional as possible. Specifically, this bill would recognize coverage of activity-specific prosthetic limbs as medically necessary under the VA benefit which the ITEM Coalition fully supports. As its title suggests, access to activity-specific prostheses would entail access to the recreational therapy veterans may need to learn how to safely perform these physical activities.

The ITEM Coalition is a national consumer- and clinician-led coalition advocating for access to and coverage of assistive devices, technologies, and related services for people with injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions of all ages. Our members represent individuals with a wide range of disabling conditions, as well as the providers who serve them, including spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, limb loss, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hearing, speech, and visual impairments, and other life-altering conditions.

Ensuring equitable access to prostheses, orthoses, and other adaptive equipment utilized by individuals with disabilities for the performance of physical activities has been a long-time priority of the ITEM Coalition. In fact, twelve states have recently adopted legislation under an initiative known as "So Every Body Can Move" which grants coverage of activity-specific prosthetic limbs and custom orthotic braces for individuals with state-regulated private health insurance. Depending on where veterans live throughout the United States, some have access to these same benefits while other veterans must go without. This legislation would make activity-specific prosthetic limb coverage consistent throughout the country and benefit all veterans with limb loss.

Veterans with limb loss and limb impairment continue to face insurmountable barriers to equal participation in physical activities in order to remain fit and healthy, which is why this bill is so

important. Most individuals with limb loss and limb impairment have been historically and routinely denied access to prosthetic care for physical activities as "not medically necessary." Far too often, the medical necessity standard has been interpreted too narrowly for individuals with limb loss and limb impairment, allowing coverage only for prostheses that provide simple ambulation, from point A to point B, or for dexterity of the upper extremities.

Without coverage, VA enrollees and their families are forced to incur prohibitive out-of-pocket costs for activity specific prostheses, risk harm or injury using a prosthetic limb not designed for physical activity, or have little choice but to live sedentary lifestyles with costly health complications, including obesity and diabetes. Veterans with disabilities need access to specialized prostheses to be able to participate in physical activities to maintain health and function, just like their non-disabled peers.

S. 3138 is squarely in line with the goals of the ITEM Coalition to ensure that all people, particularly veterans who have already sacrificed so much, are able to access the specialized devices and services they need to ensure their health and independent function. For these reasons, we are proud to support this critically important legislation and look forward to working with your offices to garner the support needed to ensure its enactment into law.

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ITEM Coalition co-coordinators Peter Thomas and Michael Barnett at Peter.Thomas@PowersLaw.com or Michael.Barnett@PowersLaw.com or call 202-466-6550.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members of the ITEM Coalition

Access Ready, Inc.
ACCSES
All Wheels Up
American Association for Homecare
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Cochlear Implant Alliance
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Macular Degeneration Foundation (AMDF)
American Music Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Amputee Coalition*
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Blinded Veterans Association
Center on Aging and DIS-Ability Policy

Clinician Task Force
Cure SMA
Institute for Matching Person and Technology
International Registry of Rehabilitation Technology Suppliers
Lakeshore Foundation
Long Island Center for Independent Living, Inc.
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Organization on Disability
Paralyzed Veterans of America
RESNA
Rifton Equipment
Spina Bifida Association*
TASH
The Viscardi Center
United Spinal Association*

****ITEM Coalition Steering Committee Member***