



April 28, 2026

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

The Honorable Jerry Moran (R-KS)
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: ITEM Coalition Support for S. 3988, the Veterans STAND Act

Dear Chairman Moran:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (“ITEM”) Coalition, we write to commend you for your leadership in reintroducing S. 3988, the *Veterans Spinal Trauma Access to New Devices (STAND) Act*, in the 119th Congress. The ITEM Coalition strongly supports this bipartisan and bicameral legislation, which would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to offer annual preventative health evaluations to veterans with spinal cord injury or disorder and increase access to state-of-the-art assistive mobility technologies, such as Exoskeletal systems and other neuromodulation technologies, which allow paralyzed veterans the ability to walk again.

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 persons 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 limb loss and limb difference, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, paralysis, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hearing, speech, and visual impairments, myositis, and other life-altering conditions.

Access to and coverage of new and emerging technologies is a long-standing priority for the ITEM Coalition. Exoskeletal suits are wearable assistive technology devices that provide powered hip and knee motion to enable individuals with spinal cord injury (“SCI”) to stand upright, walk, turn, and even ascend and descend stairs, thereby allowing them to function more independently and take part in community activities. Spinal cord neuromodulation is a type of therapy that uses gentle electrical stimulation on the skin over the spine—without surgery—that improves the nervous system with the goal being to improve movement, body functions like blood pressure or bladder control, overall independence and quality of life by helping the brain and spinal cord communicate more effectively. Other assistive technologies covered under the bill include a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”)–approved surgically implanted

device that sends electrical signals to the spinal cord to help improve function and manage other symptoms associated with SCI.

The VA estimates that approximately 42,000 individuals with spinal cord injuries are U.S. Veterans, of which the VA provides annual care to more than 27,000 individuals through the VA Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders (“SCI/D”) network. The *Veterans STAND Act*, which has been previously endorsed by a number of ITEM Coalition members, including Paralyzed Veterans of America, seeks to ensure the following:

1. Annual assistive technology evaluations are codified in law for those Veterans who seek their care through the VA;
2. VA provides Congress updates on the progress in terms of numbers of evaluations, training, and device approvals;
3. Assistive mobility technology manufacturers and other external stakeholders are included when considering changes to the clinical practice guidelines published at VA governing the evaluation, training, and procurement of exoskeleton devices; and
4. Appropriate usage of assistive technology becomes a measurable element of the overall performance metrics for leadership within existing Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), or VA regions.

Ensuring that paralyzed veterans are able to have access to and coverage of this life-changing technology is critical to the ITEM Coalition’s mission. For these reasons, we are proud to support S. 3988, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues in the Senate to pass this important piece of legislation into law.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Peter Thomas or Michael Barnett, ITEM Coalition coordinators, at Peter.Thomas@PowersLaw.com and Michael.Barnett@PowersLaw.com or by phone at 202-466-6550.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members of the ITEM Coalition

Access Ready, Inc.
ACCSES
All Wheels Up
ALS Association*
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 Occupational 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
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation*
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 (NAAOP)
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Organization on Disability
NCART
Paralyzed Veterans of America
RESNA
Rifton Equipment
Spina Bifida Association*
TASH
The Support Sight Foundation
The Viscardi Center
Unite 2 Fight Paralysis
United Spinal Association*

****Member of the ITEM Coalition Steering Committee***