



DRAFT

January XX, 2026

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

The Honorable Mike Bost
c/o Chase Kerr
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
364 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
c/o Ishmael Brown
U.S. House of Representatives
2400 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Bergman
c/o Colin Gwillim
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
566 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Josh Gottheimer
c/o Zachary Newman
U.S. House of Representatives
106 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: ITEM Coalition Support for H.R. 6835, the Veterans STAND Act

Dear Chairman Bost, and Representatives Bergman, Neguse, and Gottheimer:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (“ITEM”) Coalition, we write to express our support for H.R. 6835, the *Veterans Spinal Trauma Access to New Devices (STAND) Act of 2025*, which was introduced by the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Representative, Mike Bost (R-IL), as well as Representatives Jack Bergman (R-MI), Joe Neguse (D-CO), and Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ). This bipartisan legislation would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to offer annual preventative health evaluations to veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders 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 improve their function and even 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, 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 classified as powered orthotics 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 of enhancing movement, body functions like blood pressure or bladder control, overall independence and quality of life by helping the brain and injured 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 the 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 their 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.

Standing and ambulation have recently become litmus tests for reducing sedentary lifestyles which contributes to a reduction of chronic illness, a primary goal of the current Administration. The medical and function benefits of standing for those with mobility disabilities such as spinal cord injury are well documented in the clinical literature. Ensuring that paralyzed veterans are able to have access to and coverage of these life-changing technologies is critical to the ITEM Coalition’s mission. For these reasons, we are proud to support this bill and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues in the House 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

**Member of the ITEM Coalition Steering Committee*