

Oral Testimony – In Support of S.210 or H.1278

Thank you, Chairs [Names], and Vice Chairs [Names], for the opportunity to speak today. My name is [Your Name]. I live in [Town/City] and I use a wheelchair. I'm here to support S.210 & H.1278, which will fix serious problems with how long it takes to get wheelchairs repaired in Massachusetts.

Tell Your Story – Follow These Steps

1. About You and Your Disability

❖ *Suggested transition statement before moving into this section:*

“To understand why this bill matters, I want to share what happened to me.”

“My wheelchair is not just equipment — it’s my mobility, my freedom, and my access to life.”

❖ *[Pick 1-2 examples that show how important your wheelchair is in your life.]*

- I have [name of disability or medical condition, if you want to share it].
- I use a [manual or power] wheelchair.
- My wheelchair does not just help me — it makes it possible for me to live my life like anyone else.
- Without it, I cannot [walk, leave my bed, go outside, get to the bathroom, go to work, see my doctor, cook a meal, or be part of my community].
- With it, I can [go to work, be independent, take care of myself, socialize, travel, or contribute to my family and society].

2. A Time Your Wheelchair Broke

❖ *Suggested transition statement before moving into this section:*

“Let me tell you what it really looks like when a wheelchair repair gets delayed.”

“When my wheelchair stopped working, so did my ability to live my life.”

❖ *Share your wheelchair repair story utilizing a few questions from below. You don’t have to answer every question or be limited to only these questions.*

- What part broke or stopped working?
- How frequently do you need repairs
- How long did it take to get fixed?
- Did you get a loaner chair? Did it work for you?
- What important things did you miss or have to cancel?
- How did it make you feel? (Examples: stuck, scared, frustrated, isolated.)

3. How It Affected Your Life

- ❖ *Suggested transition statement before moving into this section:*
“The impact wasn’t just inconvenient — it was dangerous.” OR
“This experience didn’t just affect my comfort. It affected my dignity, my health, and my freedom.”
- ❖ *Sharing the impact of not having your chair had on your life. Craft this question using the questions below or create some of your own.*
 - “Because of the delay, I couldn’t [do something important].”
 - “I felt [emotion].”
 - I was (hospitalized) or (suffered XYZ medically as a result of not being able to use my chair)
 - “This situation put my [safety, health, job, dignity] at risk.”

How the Bills Will Help (Cut this section if your running out of time)

- ❖ *Suggested transition statement before moving into this section:*
“If these bills had been in place, my experience could’ve been completely different.”
OR
“This is where policy can change lives — starting with passing these bills.”
- ❖ *Utilize this section to talk about how these bills would have changed your experience. Make sure to reference back to your personal impacts here! Below are some suggestions to include with your personal impacts.*
 - “I would’ve had a working loaner chair.”
 - “There would’ve been a clear deadline for the repair.”
 - “The company would’ve been held accountable.”
 - “I wouldn’t have lost my freedom and independence.”

Close with this:

- ❖ *Suggested transition statement before closing:*
“This isn’t just about me. This is happening to people across Massachusetts.” OR
“Every delay in repair is a delay in someone’s life. That’s why action is urgent.”
- ❖ *Closing Statement Suggestions below.* Be strong and be firm! Remind them what the impact is if this bill does not pass.
 - “Every day that passes without this legislation is another day someone like me is left stranded, isolated, or in danger. That is not acceptable. Please vote yes on S.210 & H.1278 — and make sure no one is ever denied their mobility again.”
 - “Mobility is a human right, not a privilege. Our wheelchairs are our legs. When repairs are delayed, it’s the same as refusing someone the right to walk. I urge you to pass these bills and stand up for disability rights in action — not just in words.”

- “I shouldn’t have to fight to move, to live, to be safe in my own body. These bills are about restoring dignity and accountability. Please vote yes on S.210 & H.1278.”
- “You have the power to fix this. To make sure the next person who’s stuck without a wheelchair doesn’t have to suffer. I believe in a Massachusetts that doesn’t leave disabled people behind. Please vote yes.”
- “I’ve lived the consequences of inaction. And I don’t want anyone else to go through what I did. S.210 & H.1278 will prevent that. I’m asking you — not just as a voter, but as a human being — please pass these bills.”
- “When my wheelchair breaks and no one fixes it, I disappear from public life. This bill brings us back into the world. Please vote yes on S.210 OR H.1278 — and give us back our freedom.”

Thank you for your time.