



Statement of the

Fleet Reserve Association

On

H.R. 4509, the NOPAIN for Veterans Act.

Presented to the

United States House of Representatives

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health

By

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The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement in strong support of H.R. 4509, the NOPAIN for Veterans Act. Founded in 1924, FRA is the oldest and largest association serving the interests of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. FRA has a long history of advocating for sea service personnel. Our guiding principles of “Loyalty, Protection, and Service” drive our work to ensure veterans receive the quality care and protections they have earned through honorable service.

FRA has championed veterans’ health reforms for nearly a century, from post-World War II benefits expansions to modern pain management and addiction prevention initiatives. Today, as veterans continue to suffer from chronic pain and the lingering effects of the opioid epidemic, H.R. 4509 stands as a significant step forward in expanding access to safe, evidence-based pain treatments.

A Brief History of Pain Management Policy and the Need for Non-Opioid Options

Veteran pain management policy has evolved in response to the devastating consequences of opioid overreliance, which contributed to widespread addiction and overdose across both civilian and veteran populations. While the Department of Veterans Affairs has taken steps to reduce opioid exposure, access to FDA-approved non-opioid pain management options remains inconsistent across VA facilities.

H.R. 4509 addresses this gap by ensuring veterans have timely and standardized access to effective non-opioid pain treatments. These alternatives help manage both acute and chronic pain while reducing the risks associated with opioid use, including dependency, overdose, and long-term health complications.

The Importance of Non-Opioid Pain Treatments for Veterans

Pain is one of the most common service-connected conditions affecting veterans, often stemming from combat injuries, training accidents, surgeries, and long-term musculoskeletal strain. Effective pain control is essential to maintaining physical function, mental health, and overall quality of life.

Non-opioid pain treatments offer veterans safer options that align with individualized care and shared decision-making. By expanding access to these treatments, the VA can reduce

unnecessary opioid exposure, improve patient satisfaction, and support long-term recovery without compromising safety.

H.R. 4509: Key Provisions and Veteran Support

H.R. 4509, the NOPAIN for Veterans Act, amends title 38 of the United States Code to expand veterans' access to non-opioid pain management medications. Specifically, the bill:

- Defines non-opioid pain management drugs or biological products as FDA-approved treatments that relieve pain without acting on opioid receptors.
- Requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include eligible non-opioid pain medications in the VA National Formulary within a defined timeframe.
- Mandates that these medications be placed on the VA drug standardization list to ensure consistent availability across all VA medical facilities.
- Establishes clear implementation deadlines to accelerate access while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

This legislation has garnered bipartisan interest and strong support from veteran health advocates who recognize the importance of expanding safe pain management options within the VA system.

Specific Benefits of Expanding Non-Opioid Pain Formularies

H.R. 4509 delivers tangible benefits to veterans by strengthening access to safer pain treatments:

- **Reduced Risk of Addiction:** Non-opioid medications eliminate the dependency risks associated with opioid-based therapies.
- **Expanded Treatment Choice:** Veterans can collaborate with their providers to select pain management strategies that best align with their medical needs and personal preferences.
- **Consistency Across VA Facilities:** Standardized inclusion ensures equitable access regardless of location.
- **Improved Long-Term Outcomes:** Safer pain control supports rehabilitation, mental health stability, and sustained quality of life.

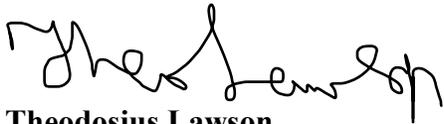
Conclusion

The Fleet Reserve Association strongly urges swift passage of H.R. 4509, the NOPAIN for Veterans Act. This commonsense reform enhances the VA's ability to deliver safe, effective, and modern pain management care while reducing reliance on opioids. By advancing this legislation, Congress can protect veterans from avoidable harm, strengthen trust in the VA healthcare system, and reaffirm its commitment to those who have served.

FRA stands ready to work with the Committee on implementation and stands with you in service to those who served.

Thank you for your leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodosius Lawson', written in a cursive style.

Theodosius Lawson

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Fleet Reserve Association

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