



Cohort of Overpressured Warfighters Action Council

2841 Majestic View Walk
Lexington, KY 40511

July 14, 2026

To:
The Honorable Jerry Moran, Chairman
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member
and the Distinguished Members of the Committee
United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Via electronic delivery

RE: S. 4744 / H.R. 9237, the Take Care of America's Veterans Act, Section 108

Dear Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, and Members of the Committee:

The Cohort of Overpressured Warfighters Action Council (COWAC) is a Kentucky social welfare organization advocating for combat arms veterans exposed to occupational blast overpressure. Since 2020, our Cohort has pursued recognition of blast overpressure injury through the sound application of peer-reviewed research.

We write in support of the overwhelming majority of the Take Care of America's Veterans Act. The Major Richard Star Act corrects a long-standing injustice against more than 59,000 medically retired, combat-injured veterans. The blast overpressure provisions in Sections 310 and 311 reflect exactly the congressional recognition our community has sought. We do not ask the Senate to slow this package.

We ask the Senate to fix the one provision that finances it on the backs of veterans who have not yet filed their claims: **Section 108**.

The Procedural Record

H.R. 9237 received no markup before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. It proceeded directly to the Committee on Rules, which reported a closed rule; the sole amendment submitted was the Chairman's own manager's amendment, described as technical edits. Not one Representative of either party was permitted to offer an amendment to strike or modify Section 108 on the House floor, and the renewed rule marked up on July 13, 2026 preserved that posture.¹ The Senate companion, S. 4744, was placed directly on the Legislative Calendar under Rule XIV, bypassing this Committee entirely.

The result is that no committee of jurisdiction in either chamber has examined Section 108, and no Member has yet been afforded a vote on whether this pay-for should stand on its own merits. The Senate floor is now the only remaining forum in which that examination can occur. We respectfully submit that

¹ H. Res. 1377 and accompanying report; House Committee on Rules, bill page for H.R. 9237, rules.house.gov/bill/119/hr-9237; Meeting Announcement, July 13, 2026 (H.R. 9237, "Rule Markup Only").



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the Members of this Committee, whose process was bypassed, have the strongest institutional claim to conduct it.

The Offset Is a Policy Choice

Veterans' compensation is exempt from pay-as-you-go sequestration under Section 255 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, codified at 2 U.S.C. § 905, and incorporated into the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, Pub. L. 111-139. Even absent any offset, PAYGO's enforcement mechanism could not lawfully reduce veterans' disability compensation.

The remaining procedural constraints, the House CUTGO rule and the Senate's pay-as-you-go point of order, are waivable, and the House proved the point: the closed rule governing H.R. 9237 waives all points of order against the bill and its provisions. Congress cannot credibly suspend its own budget rules to pass this package while maintaining that those same rules compelled it to restrict future veterans' ratings. Both propositions cannot be true.

The financing of Section 108 is therefore a policy choice. It draws up to \$57 billion over ten years from future evaluations of tinnitus and sleep apnea, affecting up to 1.5 million future claimants by VA's own analysis. It is a choice to fund one cohort of combat-injured veterans out of another cohort's future benefits, and it sets the template by which every future expansion of veterans' law will be asked: which veterans will pay for it?

The Supporting Organizations Concede the Point

Twenty of the nation's leading veterans organizations signed a letter supporting this legislation. That letter states, in its authors' own words, that legislating changes to the rating schedule “is not a standard path.” It states that, ideally, Congress would advance these priorities “without requiring offsets from future disability compensation,” that the Major Richard Star Act “would be funded through the defense authorizing committees,” and that “pay-as-you-go rules would be waived for these earned benefits.”² The bill's own supporters have identified the correct path. The Senate is the last body that can take it.

The same letter warns that the financing rests on unresolved assumptions: should the Department implement similar rating-schedule changes independently by regulation or administrative action, the projected savings would revert to the Treasury rather than fund this package.³ In that event, Section 108 purchases nothing. The restrictions remain in statute, and the reinvestment that justified them never occurs. The letter further urges Congress to preserve and strengthen key protections. In the House, that request can no longer be honored. The closed rule forecloses it. Only the Senate can act on it now.

Requests

For these reasons, COWAC respectfully requests that the Members of this Committee:

² Letter of Support, Take Care of America's Veterans Act, to Chairmen Moran and Bost and Ranking Members Blumenthal and Takano, June 29, 2026 (twenty signatory organizations), available at publicans-veterans.house.gov.

³ *Id.*



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1. Strike Section 108 from S. 4744 on the Senate floor, or amend it to remove all restrictions on future disability evaluations for tinnitus and obstructive sleep apnea;
2. Fund the Major Richard Star Act through the defense authorizing committees, where the underlying obligation originated;
3. If an offset is nonetheless demanded, waive the applicable pay-as-you-go point of order, consistent with the House's waiver of all points of order against this same legislation;
4. Obtain, before any floor vote, a written statement from the Administration as to whether rating-schedule changes for tinnitus and sleep apnea will proceed independently of this legislation by regulation or other administrative action;
5. Preserve the blast overpressure provisions of Sections 310 and 311; and
6. Should any form of Section 108 survive, ensure prospective application only, with no retroactive harm to current beneficiaries, and require statutory reinvestment of any scored savings in veterans' programs.

Conclusion

The Senate floor is the last place where the process this Committee was denied can be restored. We must honor Lincoln's Promise: "To care for him (and her) who shall have borne the battle and for his (their) widow, and his (their) orphan." We must do so without presenting the bill for that care to the men and women who will bear the next battle.

COWAC stands ready to brief any Member or staff on the evidentiary record and the legislative analysis summarized above.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Grossman
Founder, President, and Chairman
Cohort of Overpressured Warfighters Action Council (COWAC)

Attachments:

COWAC, "Silence on Process Is a Position," July 14, 2026, <https://cowac.org/2026/07/14/silence-on-process-is-a-position/>.