

September 15, 2014

Chairman Darrell Issa
Oversight and Government Reform Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Elijah Cummings
Oversight and Government Reform Committee
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Cummings:

On behalf of the over 200,000 managers and supervisors currently serving our nation in the federal government and whose interests are represented by the Federal Managers Association (FMA), we extend our strongest support for the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act (H.R. 5229). This legislation before you would provide much needed sick leave to first year federal employees who qualify under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as 30 percent disabled. By allotting 104 hours of sick leave to these first year federal employees for their first twelve months of employment, these men and women will not have to take leave without pay in order to keep appointments with VA medical facilitators. FMA has seen young men and women struggle with available leave as they attempt to keep service-related, medically-necessary appointments. This puts undue stress on both managers and their federal employees as they try to meet congressionally-mandated missions and goals.

Federal employees begin their service with a zero sum balance of sick leave, accumulating four hours of sick leave a pay period, resulting in 104 hours at the end of their first year, if no leave is used during this time. Our members, however, have noted those newly employed to federal service with a 30 percent or higher VA disability rating have numerous doctors' appointments for chronic conditions. These appointments are not only necessary for medical reasons but also to keep their disability rating. Further adding complications, VA facilities are often in inconvenient locations, forcing disabled veterans to travel for hours for an appointment. One FMA member noted that travel and appointments took up thirty hours of sick leave in three months. At this rate, the employee would need 120 hours of sick leave a year, well over what can be earned.

I urge you to support H.R. 5229 when it is considered in committee. This legislation will provide unencumbered leave to brave men and women who made tremendous sacrifices while in the military, who then continue to serve their country within federal departments and agencies. It is only right that the federal government provide this much needed sick leave to these disabled veterans. Thank you for your continued support of the men and women in the public sector. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact FMA's Government Affairs Director Greg Stanford at gstanford@fedmanagers.org or (703) 683-8700.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Niehaus
National President

Cc: Oversight and Government Reform Committee