

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5539

To amend title 38, United States Code, to assign the highest priority status for hospital care and medical services provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans who are former prisoners of war.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2025

Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to assign the highest priority status for hospital care and medical services provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans who are former prisoners of war.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “POW Priority Care  
5 Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. HIGHEST PRIORITY STATUS FOR ENROLLMENT OF**  
2 **FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR IN HEALTH**  
3 **CARE SYSTEM OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-**  
4 **ERANS AFFAIRS.**

5 (a) ENROLLMENT.—Section 1705(a) of title 38,  
6 United States Code, is amended—

7 (1) in paragraph (1)—

8 (A) by striking “and veterans” and insert-  
9 ing “, veterans”; and

10 (B) by striking the period at the end and  
11 inserting “, and veterans who are former pris-  
12 oners of war.”; and

13 (2) in paragraph (3), by striking “who are  
14 former prisoners of war or”.

15 (b) EXTENDED CARE SERVICES.—Section  
16 1710B(c)(2)(D) of such title is amended by inserting “a  
17 veteran who is a former prisoner of war or” before “a vet-  
18 eran who”.

19 (c) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by this  
20 section shall apply with respect to veterans who are former  
21 prisoners of war before, on, or after the date of the enact-  
22 ment of this Act.

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