I am outraged that my government seems to think that they have the right to interfere in a relationship between a patient and their physician and dictate medical care. Considering the fact that we are talking about something that should be and always has been a private matter, my government has waged a war on drugs that has been a total failure. And in the process have bullied doctors and fed the public fake data. According to another branch of my government, the incidence of abuse by patients with a prescription for opioid medication ranges somewhere between 1 and 6%. Also, according to the National Center for Health Statistics in 2016, 63,000 people died related to opioid medications. 1/3 caused by fentanyl, ¼ by heroine, and 23% by opioid drugs. The real issue for our government should be the issue of street drugs. That is where the problem lies, the problem is not the people who use opioid medication to relieve horrid intractable pain, a medication that gives people a reason to get up everyday and keep going. It has been taken away by our government. We are supposed to be a civilized progressive society; how does that equate to 100 million people in this country that suffer from severe intractable pain being denied treatment by their government. I have had an ongoing severe chronic pain issue for forty years. For the last thirty years, I have used opioid medication on a daily basis. I have never abused my medications, I have never sold my medications, I have never doctor shopped for medication, I have never done any of the things that street people do to feed their habit. And yet I am being punished by my government, a government who thinks they have the right to take my medication away. The medication that has allowed me to raise a family successfully, to run five businesses successfully, to participate in government successfully, and to have some quality to my life. Pain is an insidious thing, it affects every level of your being, both physically, emotionally, and mentally. Every aspect of your life is affected. There are very few studies of any consequence related to chronic pain and the use of opioids by chronic pain patients, and yet our government takes street facts to use against the people who have pain issues. When it comes to the relationship between a doctor and a patient, I don’t see the government denying patients heart medications or taking insulin from a diabetic, or chemo from a cancer patient, and yet our government seems to feel they have the right to take away pain medication from pain patients. The opioid crisis is mainly a fabricated crisis by our government that has nothing to do with the proper treatment for people living with chronic pain. Chronic pain patients don’t have a lot to choose from when it comes to treating pain. There is only one class of medications used to treat chronic pain, taking that away from people is cruel and ignorant. Until and unless the chronic pain epidemic is resolved, the only medication that works should not be taken away or restricted by our government. To leave people with no options is beyond cruel. It’s not like a chronic pain patient has a lot of choices when it comes to treating their level of pain. Most chronic pain people are very responsible people, careful with their medications, and yet we live with the stigma of street addicts.

Doctors should be allowed to do what they are trained and licensed to do, there are approximately 10 million chronic pain patients using opioid medications, and a very small percentage of those have issues or have misused their medications. Overlooking the dangers of NSAIDS deaths, aspirin causes 3,000 deaths a year. These medications should never be used for chronic pain, as they increase the risk of severe damage and death. The risk of a potentially fatal heart attack or stroke, according to a FDA advisory issued in July of 2015, elderly patients are at greater risk of death, that no period of use is safe or without risk. The risk of liver failure is also extremely high.

Most of the prevailing attitudes regarding opioids are the result of junk science, ignorance, and a serious lack of research facts. To date there have not been any long-term research on opioids, their value to humanity, their use long term, their use in the elderly etc. Just the fact that these prescription drugs for the people who use them, are in the same boat as illegal street drugs and junkies. To punish a whole class of law abiding citizens as junkies, shows how truly insane the government agenda is. If this insane regulation is approved, more people will die, not less. This will be a total failure of compassion, common sense, and facts. Requiring elderly severe chronic pain patients to see a doctor once a week for a prescription and to physically visit the pharmacy to fill that prescription is extremely discriminatory. To my mind it is elder abuse. Many elderly chronic pain patients do not drive, very rarely leave their home, and this would put an unreasonable burden on them, not to mention the expense that would be incurred by such regulations.

Our government seems happy to quote the fact that opioid prescriptions have fallen drastically in recent years. What they are not reporting, is the fact that those scripts that were not written, equate to suffering on the part of pain patients, and for some suicide. Horrible suffering by law abiding citizens who have had their only pain relief taken away from them by their government. Our government has managed to bully and brainwash physicians into believing the garbage facts the government presents are somehow real, when in fact they are not. The only other option that some people have for dealing with their pain is marijuana. Which is classed as a schedule 1 drug by our government, when in reality it should have never been put in that position. It is severely restricted by our government, with misinformation and lies. Even so, once again cost comes into the equation, even though marijuana works for some people to relieve the intensity of their pain, it is expensive and not everyone can afford it. It’s not covered by any insurance, people in our government seem to think that chronic pain people have all these options for dealing with their pain, yet the reality is these options cost huge amounts of money that most retired chronic pain people do not have. So, in reality there are NO options. In my chronic pain group, in the last couple of years more and more people are giving up. People like myself who use opioid on a daily basis and have been relatively successful in lowering their pain threshold, are throwing in the towel. The end of life discussion happens on a daily basis among severe chronic pain people. When doctors allow terminally ill cancer patients to die screaming in pain, because they do not want to turn them into an addict, you know how truly bizarre this whole situation is. A doctor is sworn to do no harm, how do you equate that to allowing someone to die in excruciating pain and not dealing with that pain? This is not a third world country, and yet with regards to the issue with chronic pain and the use of opioid medication, we are farther down the list than that. Pain patients are the most under treated, untreated and abused patients in the United States, we treat our dogs better than we treat our citizens of this country when the issue is pain. Rather than take away or restrict the use of opioid medication, to my mind, it would make more sense to train doctors and provide them with real facts and figures related to the use of opioids by their patients. The management of chronic pain is a very complex issue, unfortunately there are very few trained certified doctors who specialize in the treatment of chronic pain. When you add to that, the misinformation agenda by our government and the harassment by the DEA, physicians are afraid to treat their pain patients. As a result, millions of people are suffering when they don’t need to, it doesn’t have to be that way. It’s as if our government has lost its mind when it comes to the use of opioid medication, they don’t seem to be able to separate the lawful use of opioid medication from the illegal street use of opioid drugs. The war on drugs should not be leveled against the citizens who use these drugs lawfully and legally. Before the government makes it more difficult for people with chronic pain to obtain treatment, they need to do further research and separate the two issues. Chronic pain patients deserve far better treatment and respect from their government and their physicians, which they are not getting. The fact that 1/3 of the population of this country is dealing with chronic pain issues makes it more important than ever that our government works for the people, to try and resolve the issue of chronic pain and opioid medication and not to work against the people already suffering with more pain than anyone should have to live with. This issue is far more important than any other issue facing this country. It has been swept under the rug for far too long and needs to be acknowledged and addressed honestly and realistically now more than ever before.