

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) announced today that mileage reimbursement rates for eligible veterans will more than double tomorrow. The freshman lawmaker has championed the issue and helped pass the fiscal year 2008 omnibus appropriations bill, which dedicated \$125 million for a mileage reimbursement increase of 17.5 cents a mile.

“This is the first increase in mileage reimbursement in 30 years,” said Buchanan. “It is long overdue.”

Buchanan noted, “Gas prices are high. We can have the best possible health care, but it is of little use if our veterans can’t afford the gas to get there. Increasing the mileage reimbursement rate will help veterans access the health care services they were promised.”

Beginning February 1, 2008, the Veterans Administration will increase the mileage reimbursement rate for eligible veterans from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile for travel to VA medical facilities. Buchanan has been working with like-minded members of Congress to increase the reimbursement rate even higher to 48.5 cents per mile.

“This is a good first step forward,” added Buchanan. “But the reimbursement rate for veterans should not be less than what any federal employee receives. I will continue to work with area veterans to bring the mileage reimbursement rate to 48.5 cents a mile.”

Area veterans praised the 13th District Congressman for successfully working to increase the mileage reimbursement rate for those who have served in the U.S. armed forces.

“In his first term, Congressman Buchanan has made good on his promise to fight for veterans and increase the gas reimbursement rate,” said retired Col. Lee Kichen of the VFW’s National Legislative Committee. “We will continue to work with the Congressman to get mileage reimbursement to a rate respectful of veterans who have sacrificed much in our defense.”

Buchanan represents more than 97,000 veterans and is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.