

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan today praised retired Army General James Peake as a uniquely qualified candidate to serve as U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs. President Bush nominated Peake today to lead the federal agency responsible for providing health care and benefits to our nation's veterans.

"Our nation's veterans deserve the full support of the United States government," said Buchanan. "The VA faces enormous challenges to meet the needs of former service men and women – including those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. As a wounded combat veteran and a former medical officer, Dr. Peake has the knowledge and personal experience to ensure that our nation's veterans receive the quality care and benefits they have earned. If he is confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with him on behalf of my district's 97,000 veterans."

Buchanan is a member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. Peake is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He received a Silver Star and Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam. He received his medical degree from Cornell University and spent 40 years in military medicine and four years as Army surgeon general.