

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) today thanked the Senate for passing a companion to House-passed legislation he introduced to improve patient care for wounded soldiers. The Senate this week passed an amendment introduced by Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL) to require the Department of Defense to study the feasibility of implementing a standard Soldier Patient Tracking System. The House in March unanimously approved a similar amendment authored by Buchanan to address problems with the medical holdover process exposed by the scandal at Walter Reed Medical Center.

“Members of our armed forces who have voluntarily sacrificed their health to help ensure our freedom and security deserve the best possible care,” said Buchanan. “A patient tracking system would make available, on-demand, important information regarding the status their care and help them get the treatment they need in a timely manner. I commend Mel Martinez and his colleagues in the Senate for recognizing the importance of making the medical holdover system more responsive and effective for wounded soldiers.”

The amendment is now part of the Senate’s version of the fiscal year 2008 “Department of Defense Authorization Act.” The Soldier Patient Tracking System amendment was made part of the House-passed “Wounded Warrior Assistance Act.” If signed into law, the legislation would require the Department of Defense to identify and report to Congress ways of making the medical holdover system more responsive and effective for military personnel.