

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) today praised the U.S. Senate for including federal funding for a Sarasota National Veterans Cemetery in legislation on the floor of the Senate this week. The fiscal year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Administration appropriations bill (S. 1645) includes \$27.8 million in federal funding for the construction of the cemetery on Clark Road in Sarasota County.

The House in June passed the Fiscal Year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act (H.R. 2642), which also included \$27.8 million requested by Buchanan for the construction of the national cemetery.

"I am pleased the Senate has followed the House's lead and provided the funding necessary to keep this project on track for the region's nearly 400,000 veterans," said Buchanan. "Senate passage of this bill will help ensure that the federal government honors its commitment to provide them with a final resting place close to home and ensure a lasting tribute to their dedicated service."

The Veterans Administration purchased property for the cemetery in April. Currently in the design phase, officials expect to begin the construction phase of the project in May 2008 with the first burials anticipated in October 2008. The entire first phase of the project expected to be complete in 2011. The 60 acre site will provide 25,700 casket and cremation burials. The entire property is expected to provide burial capacity beyond the year 2050.