

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13), appearing at a ceremony Friday to honor Clay Moore in Washington DC, announced that 26 members of the U.S. House have co-sponsored his legislation to protect children from criminal illegals.

The "Clay Moore Kidnapping Prevention Act" (H.R. 1735) would increase the federal penalty by 10 years for illegal immigrants who kidnap our kids. The bill is named for 13 year-old Clay Moore of Parrish, Florida who was kidnapped at gunpoint from a school bus stop in February. The man accused of the crime is an illegal immigrant who allegedly planed to extort money from Clay's family. Clay escaped after being bound, gagged and tied to a tree in the woods.

"Kidnapping for ransom is a common occurrence in Mexico and Latin America," said Buchanan. "We need to prevent it from becoming a trend here in the United States. The message must be loud and clear to illegal aliens who should not be here in the first place. Kidnapping our children will not be tolerated. "

The Clay Moore bill seeks to deter these types of kidnappings by increasing from 20 years to 30 years the mandatory minimum sentence for kidnapping minors. U.S. citizens convicted of the same offense would still face the current 20-year sentence.

Buchanan helped honor Clay's heroic escape in Washington, D.C. today at a U.S. Department of Justice ceremony to commemorate National Missing Children's Day. Clay and his family were in Washington Friday to attend the ceremony, during which he received the 2007 AMBER Alert Courage Award.

"Clay Moore is a remarkable young man who showed enormous courage and cunning by escaping his abductor," said Buchanan. "I am pleased that he has received national recognition for his heroic actions during this tragic ordeal. On National Missing Children's Day is appropriate that we celebrate the recovery of missing children, as well as remember those children who remain missing."