

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) will introduce legislation today to help protect children from dangerous predators. The "Clay Moore Child Abduction Prevention Act" would establish a federal mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years in prison for illegal immigrants convicted of kidnapping a child in the United States. The current federal minimum sentence for kidnapping someone under 18 years of age is 20 years.

The bill was inspired by the February abduction of 13-year-old Clay Moore of Parish. An illegal immigrant has confessed abducting Clay from his school bus stop. Vicente Ignacio Beltran-Moreno is charged with armed kidnapping and aggravated assault for allegedly forcing Clay into his truck at gunpoint and leaving him bound to a tree about 20 miles away.

"This horrific attack underscored the need to crack down on illegal immigrants by imposing harsher penalties on anyone who while unlawfully in our country targets our nation's kids for violent crimes," said Buchanan. "My two sons are grown now, but I can still imagine the suffering the Moore family endured during this whole incident. The message to illegal aliens must be loud and clear – it is bad enough that you are in this country illegally, but if you kidnap our children, you will be dealt with swiftly and severely."

Clay managed to free himself and call for help. Beltran-Moreno fled to Mexico where he was found by Sheriff's deputies and FBI agents who convinced him to turn himself in to U.S. authorities.

"We are grateful and fortunate that Clay came home safely and his alleged abductor is in custody," said Clay Moore's stepfather Steve Kelle. "But no family should endure the fear and suffering we went through. We enthusiastically support legislation to increase penalties on illegal immigrants convicted of kidnapping a child. Our hope is that Clay's law will serve as a deterrent and prevent other families from having to endure the kidnapping of child. We hope with the passing of this bill that some good will come from our ordeal."

"Illegal immigration is a major problem," said Wells. "Crimes committed by illegal immigrants are an even bigger problem. Crimes committed against our children by illegal aliens should not be tolerated. I applaud Congressman Buchanan for addressing this issue by calling for increased mandatory sentences. If enacted, this bill will help protect kids by ensuring an appropriate sentence."