

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) today welcomed President Bush's proposed Fiscal Year 2008 budget, which includes \$27.8 million to design and construct a new national veterans cemetery at the Hawkins Ranch property in Sarasota.

"With almost 97,000 veterans, Florida's 13th District has the 5th largest veterans population in the nation," said Buchanan. "They deserve to be buried with respect and dignity. This cemetery will help the Veterans Administration provide area veterans and their loved ones with easy access to their final resting place."

Funds to purchase the Hawkins property were appropriated in 2006. The Veterans Administration anticipates that the first burials will occur in the fall of 2008.

The President's proposed spending plan would fund federal programs while balancing the budget with in the next five years.

"I strongly support the President's goal of balancing the budget by 2012 without raising taxes," said Buchanan. "Higher taxes would halt the economic growth that has increased federal revenues. The way to balance the budget is to sustain economic growth by making the tax cuts permanent while eliminating wasteful spending."

The Congressman also announced today that House Republican Conference Chairman, Congressman Adam Putnam (R-FL 12) has agreed to cosponsor Buchanan's bill to amend the U.S. Constitution to require a balanced budget by 2012.

"The tax cuts of 2003 have helped boost federal revenues by 68 percent and yet the national debt is \$8.6 trillion and increasing by over a billion dollars every day," said Buchanan. "This clearly proves that there are severe basic flaws in the current federal budget system. My bill would force lawmakers to make the tough decisions necessary to balance the budget for taxpayers today and for future generations."

In addition to Putnam, Congressmen Mario Diaz-Balart (FL 25), John Mica (FL 7), and Jeff Miller (FL 1) have cosponsored the Buchanan Balanced Budget Amendment Act (H. J. Res 21). The bill would require: a 3/5 vote for any increases in the debt, that the President submit a balanced budget to Congress, and that any legislation to increase revenue must be passed by a true majority of each chamber – not just a majority of those present and voting. Exceptions to these provisions are provided in times of military conflicts and natural disasters.