

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-13th District, today expressed his opposition to a resolution that would undermine troop morale while making America less safe.

In his statement on the floor of the House, Buchanan said, "...Although legitimate questions can be raised about whether this surge strategy will prove successful, the stakes are too high and the threat to America too great to walk away without giving our troops one last chance to restore order in Iraq. Passage of this resolution will deny our military leaders and our troops this one last opportunity."

Buchanan closed his speech by saying, "Like all Americans, I want to bring our troops home safely, successfully and soon. But now is not the time for immediate withdrawal. Now is the time to support our troops, support the values they fight for and do everything possible to give them the best chance to succeed in their mission. This resolution does nothing to help in those efforts. In fact, it does the opposite."

Below is the full text of Buchanan's speech:

*Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this resolution. I oppose the resolution not for what it says, but for what it does, and what it will lead to.*

*As someone who enlisted at the age of 18 and spent six years as a member of the Air National Guard, I can tell you first-hand that this resolution would undermine our troops' morale and diminish their ability to accomplish their mission. Passage of this resolution is also a dangerous first step toward cutting off funding for our troops. And that is something that I cannot support.*

*Mr. Speaker, the War in Iraq is an important part of the global War on Terror. Failure in Iraq would go beyond being a disaster for American foreign policy. Failure would destabilize the country, destabilize the Middle East, and make America less safe. The American people are well-aware of Al Qaeda plans to turn Iraq into a staging area to spread its global terrorism.*

*Failure in Iraq would also result in diminished influence and credibility for America at a time when global alliances are critical to address threats from Iran and North Korea.*

*Mr. Speaker, this week I have been briefed by U.S. intelligence officers, foreign ambassadors from the region, and I reached out to many of my constituents – including Col. John Saputo, who served in Iraq and Col. Lee Kichen who served in Vietnam.*

*We all agreed that although legitimate questions can be raised about whether this surge strategy will prove successful, the stakes are too high and the threat to America too great to walk away without giving our troops one last chance to restore order in Iraq. Passage of this resolution will deny our military leaders and our troops this one last opportunity.*

*Like all Americans, I want to bring our troops home safely, successfully and soon. But now is not the time for immediate withdrawal.*

*Now is the time to support our troops, support the values they fight for and do everything possible to give them the best chance to succeed in their mission. This resolution does nothing to help in those efforts. In fact, it does the opposite.*

*It is for this reason that I must oppose this resolution.*