

**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-FL, today voted to extend the payroll tax cut, saying the economy is too fragile to hit the average working family with a \$1,000 tax increase. The *Middle Class Tax Relief & Job Creation Act*, which is fully offset by savings elsewhere in the federal budget, also included language to ensure seniors on Medicare continue to have access to their doctor.

The House-approved legislation would extend the payroll tax cut for one calendar year, expiring on December 31, 2012. The bill would extend the current rate of 4.2 percent for employees, and 10.4 percent for the self-employed.

“If we are serious about reducing unemployment and strengthening our economy, we should not punish workers with higher taxes at a time when the economy continues to struggle,” said Buchanan, noting the payroll extension will save the average working family \$1,000 in 2012. “I support today’s legislation because it extends the tax cut in a fiscally responsible manner.”

Also included in the *Middle Class Tax Relief & Job Creation Act* is a provision to prevent a 27.4 percent reduction in reimbursement rates for physicians who treat senior citizens on Medicare. Instead of a reduction, the legislation will increase payment rates by 1 percent through 2013.

“Senior citizens rely on Medicare to see their doctors,” said Buchanan, who serves on the influential Health Subcommittee of Ways & Means. “If these cuts go into place, many doctors in our area have told me they would simply close their doors. This bill will help ensure that their doors remain open and that our seniors continue to receive the quality health care they deserve.”