Slams Legislation Regulating Freedom of Expression on Internet

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Vern Buchanan, R-FL, in a letter to President Obama and congressional leaders, expressed strong opposition to the "Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA)," -- a bill that could have a chilling effect on free speech and innovation on the Internet.

"This misguided legislation poses a serious threat to a free and open Internet," said Buchanan. "While we need to combat copyright infringement and online piracy, the solution is not censorship or excessive regulation of the global Internet. The heavy hand of the government must not be allowed to threaten our basic online freedoms."

Internet and technology companies such as Google and Yahoo have expressed serious concerns with the anti-piracy legislation. "The censorship regulations written into these bills won't shut down pirate sites," Google said on its website. "These sites will just change their addresses and continue their criminal activities, while law-abiding companies will suffer high penalties for breaches they can't possibly control."

Buchanan said regulation of the Internet is something to be expected from restrictive societies like China, Iran, and North Korea -- but not the United States.

"Since its inception, the Internet has been a revolutionary tool in our society, encouraging the free exchange of information and ideas," said Buchanan. "Excessive regulations and government intrusion would only serve to hinder the innovation and progress of this cutting-edge tool. I will continue to fight for policies that preserve and protect an open and democratic Internet."

Legislation restricting the Internet has been drafted in both the House and Senate – the main sponsors intend to move forward and push for its passage.