

Buchanan's Bill to Replace DD-214 With Veterans ID Card Passes Senate Without Opposition

On Monday, June 22, 2015, the U.S. Senate amended and passed with unanimous consent a bill from a Florida congressman which ensures every veteran receives an ID card from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs without burdening taxpayers. The House passed the bill last month with 402 representatives backing it and no votes cast against it.

U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., introduced the Veterans ID Card Act earlier this year. Buchanan's bill would ensure all veterans receive ID cards from the VA instead of just those who served 20 years in the armed forces or are seeking medical treatment for service-related wounds.

In pushing his bill in recent months, Buchanan has noted veterans are forced to carry DD-214 paperwork, which contains sensitive information including Social Security numbers, and an ID card would be more convenient and would do a better job of keeping their personal information secure.

"A simple, standardized ID card will make life easier for our veterans and serve as a reminder that our brave service men and women deserve all the respect a grateful nation can offer," Buchanan said on Tuesday.

Buchanan insisted his bill was budget neutral since veterans who opted for the ID card would have a small fee which the VA secretary would examine every five years. In the Senate, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., offered an amendment to Buchanan's bill ensuring all veterans would be eligible for the ID card, sending the bill back to the House. Buchanan's office expects the bill to sail through the House once again and be signed into law by President Barack Obama.

Congressional co-sponsors of the bill included U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., the chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown, D-Fla., the ranking Democrat on the committee. Other congressional representatives from Florida who co-sponsored the bill include Republican U.S. Reps. Ander Crenshaw, Ron DeSantis, Mario Diaz-Balart, David Jolly, Bill Posey, Dennis Ross and Ted Yoho, and Democratic U.S. Reps. Ted Deutch and Alcee Hastings. The bill has also won the backing of veterans groups including AMVETS and Veterans for Common Sense (VCS).

Anthony Hardie, the director of VCS, praised the bill on Tuesday. "Veterans who have honorably served their country deserve to have a simple, straightforward way to prove their veteran status," Hardie said. "Veterans for Common Sense supports sensible legislation like Rep. Buchanan's Veterans ID Card Act."