

# Florida Congressional Reps Back Replacing DD-214 With Veterans ID Card

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July 9, 2015 - 11:30am

Congressional representatives from across the Sunshine State cheered the passage of U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan's, R-Fla., Veterans ID Card Act this week.

The bill, which passed the U.S. House on Tuesday without opposition, is now headed to President Barack Obama's desk. 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.

The House passed the bill last month with 402 representatives backing it and no votes cast against it. In the Senate, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., offered an amendment to Buchanan's bill last month ensuring all veterans would be eligible for the ID card. The Senate passed the amended bill without opposition, sending the bill back to the House which passed it on a 411-0 vote on Tuesday. Obama is expected to sign it.

During his efforts to pass the legislation, Buchanan insisted his bill was budget-neutral because veterans who opted for the ID card would have a small fee which the VA secretary would examine every five years.

From his perch on the U.S. House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, U.S. Rep. Ander Crenshaw, R-Fla., applauded the bill.

"Our veterans have put their lives on the line so we may live in freedom and deserve access to the benefits they've earned in an efficient manner," Crenshaw said on Wednesday. "They shouldn't have to carry around pages and pages of information -- some of it sensitive and private -- to prove their military service.

"I backed the Veterans ID Card Act every step of the way because it provides proof of military service in one simple card – a common-sense move. Our veterans will now be able to leave their lengthy DD-214 forms at home," Crenshaw added.

The First Coast congressman co-sponsored the bill, making him one of several representatives from the Sunshine State to back it, with 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 Republicans Carlos

Curbelo, Ron DeSantis, Mario Diaz-Balart, David Jolly, Bill Posey, Dennis Ross and Ted Yoho, and Democrats Ted Deutch and Alcee Hastings. The bill has also won the backing of veterans groups including AMVETS and Veterans for Common Sense (VCS).

Ross, part of the House leadership as senior deputy majority whip, insisted the bill would help keep veterans' personal information secure.

“My colleagues and I came together to pass bipartisan legislation that will help our brave and selfless veterans protect themselves against identify theft,” Ross said after the vote on Tuesday. “The Veterans ID Card Act will now allow veterans to easily request an ID card that proves they served honorably in the armed services, without exposing their private information, such as their Social Security numbers.

“Under current law, the VA only issues ID cards to veterans who have served at least 20 years or those who receive medical care for a service-connected disability,” Ross added. “This leaves a large number of veterans vulnerable to identity theft because they must carry around their DD-214 documents, which contain sensitive personal information, to prove their veteran status. Our veterans risked their lives to protect ours; it is now our duty to protect them.”

On Wednesday, Curbelo noted the benefits of the ID card for veterans.

“The passage of the Veterans ID Act signifies a shift in progress to improve the lives of our veterans,” Curbelo said. “HR 91 would require the VA to issue proper identification to veterans who request a card, present a copy of authorized documentation noting their service, and pay a nominal card fee.

“On a recent trip to Monroe County, I had the opportunity to speak with veterans at a VFW meeting in Key West,” Curbelo added. “After listening to their stories and their difficulties in navigating the cumbersome VA, I know vets will greatly benefit from this piece of legislation. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of HR 91, and applaud Rep. Buchanan for his leadership in introducing this essential bill that should quickly be signed into law.”

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- See more at: [http://www.sunshinestatenews.com/story/florida-congressional-representatives-back-replacing-dd-214-veterans-id-card?utm\\_source=ConstantContact&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=NewsAlert-sthash.vDVywazR.dpuf](http://www.sunshinestatenews.com/story/florida-congressional-representatives-back-replacing-dd-214-veterans-id-card?utm_source=ConstantContact&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NewsAlert-sthash.vDVywazR.dpuf)