

WASHINGTON (10 Oct.) -- In observance of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.), a member of the Congressional Cancer Caucus, today signed on as an original co-sponsor of a resolution (H. Res. 320) that would bring greater attention to this deadly disease.

H. Res. 320 supports the observance of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, salutes the more than 2.4 million breast cancer survivors in the U.S. and the efforts of victims, volunteers and professionals who combat the disease each day. Despite being a leading cause of death among women, particularly between the ages of 45 and 54, detection in the early stages has yielded a more than 98 percent overall survival rate.

“Over the years, an effort to raise awareness and education of breast cancer has grown into a national movement of pink, which has come to signify the color of its supporters,” said Bilirakis who shaved his head in August to raise awareness for the work of the American Cancer Society’s Southeast Hillsborough Unit and to demonstrate support for those battling cancer. “The success of this movement is without question, and all of those who work to bring this issue to the forefront of the American public should be applauded for their hard work.”

Earlier this week, Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis (R-VA) died after a nearly two year battle with breast cancer. Bilirakis spoke about Davis’s passing and used the opportunity to encourage more awareness

“I am saddened by the loss of my colleague Jo Ann Davis, who succumbed to breast cancer this past week,” said Bilirakis. “Her courage and leadership in raising awareness of this disease, as well as her two-year battle against this disease until her death, is a reminder of the struggle millions of women and men face each year. It is incumbent upon Congress to demonstrate their commitment to breast cancer awareness and education by passing this resolution.”

In addition to being an original co-sponsor of the Breast Cancer Awareness Month resolution, Bilirakis has supported other efforts to combat the disease, including his vote in support of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act, H.R. 1132, which provides grant money to reduce the mortality rate from breast and cervical cancer.