Modified version of H.R. 1580 agreed to by voice vote

March 29, 2007

Washington, D.C. - Yesterday, Congress passed H.R. 1538, the Wounded Warriors Assistance Act, which addresses the unacceptable conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Facility. H.R. 1538 will improve the management of medical care, personnel actions and quality of life issues for the military service members. The bill passed unanimously 426-0.

During consideration of the bill, the House agreed by voice vote to incorporate Rep. Bilirakis' (R-Palm Harbor) amendment, which creates a Department of Defense (DoD) wide Ombudsman to oversee the answering and assisting of patient and family questions concerning administrative processes and financial and non-military related services available throughout a patient's recovery.

This legislation was originally introduced as H.R. 1580, in a package of Republican bills addressing the problems at Walter Reed, but was modified to be included as an amendment to H.R. 1538.

"I applaud my colleagues for acting quickly to address the unacceptable conditions at Walter Reed and passing the Wounded Warriors Assistance Act," Rep. Bilirakis said. "Our military personnel and veterans deserve the best medical care possible. Creating a DoD-wide Ombudsman will help soldiers and their families cut through the red tape, allowing them to concentrate on healing and not maneuvering through a bureaucracy."

# # #