

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2682

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in West Haven, Connecticut, as the “Captain Paul W. ‘Bud’ Bucha VA Medical Center”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 2, 2025

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice, considered, read the third time, and passed

A BILL

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in West Haven, Connecticut, as the “Captain Paul W. ‘Bud’ Bucha VA Medical Center”.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Captain Paul W. ‘Bud’
5 Bucha VA Medical Center Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha was born on August
9 1, 1943, in Washington, DC.

1 (2) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha, a recipient of the
2 Medal of Honor and an advocate for veterans, is an
3 American hero.

4 (3) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha, the son of a colonel
5 in the Army, spent his childhood in California, Ger-
6 many, Indiana, Japan, and St. Louis, Missouri.

7 (4) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha turned down several
8 scholarships for both academics and athletics and in-
9 stead enrolled in the United States Military Acad-
10 emy at West Point, New York. He went on to be a
11 two-time All-American and captain of the West
12 Point swim team. In 1965, he graduated in the top
13 5 percent of his class and number two in Military
14 Order of Merit.

15 (5) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha earned a Masters of
16 Business Administration from Stanford University
17 in 1967, all while completing Airborne and Ranger
18 training between academic years.

19 (6) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha reported for duty
20 with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell,
21 Kentucky, to prepare for deployment to Vietnam as
22 part of Operation Eagle Thrust in November 1967.

23 (7) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha was appointed com-
24 mander of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infan-
25 try Regiment. His company was the last rifle com-

1 pany to be formed during an Army expansion. He
2 jokingly recalled that his recruits were men who had
3 flunked basic infantry tasks, former prisoners, and
4 “guys with master’s degrees in Elizabethan lit-
5 erature”. He took pride in his company, dubbed the
6 “clerks and jerks”. They went on to become one of
7 the most decorated units by the end of the war.

8 (8) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha distinguished him-
9 self with extraordinary heroism while leading 89
10 men on a reconnaissance mission near Phuoc Vinh,
11 Vietnam, from March 16th through 18th, 1968. As
12 part of the Tet Offensive, his unit was dropped by
13 helicopter and his men set out to repel attacks by
14 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. As the sun
15 set on March 18, 1968, he and his men advanced
16 into a dense jungle and found themselves outgunned
17 by approximately 1,500 enemy troops. Under attack,
18 he crawled 40 yards through the hail of fire and sin-
19 glehandedly destroyed a machine-gun bunker with
20 grenades, all while sustaining a shrapnel wound. He
21 then orchestrated an overnight offensive, directing
22 his men to spread out, throw grenades, and unleash
23 heavy fire. He made the enemy believe they were a
24 much larger force. His leadership led to the defeat
25 of a superior Vietnamese stronghold, leaving 156

1 enemy dead. Come morning, he guided the medical
2 evacuation of three air-ambulance loads of seriously
3 wounded personnel.

4 (9) President Richard Nixon presented the
5 Medal of Honor to Paul W. “Bud” Bucha in a cere-
6 mony at the White House in 1970.

7 (10) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha originally wanted
8 to turn down the Medal of Honor because he did not
9 feel deserving. In Vietnam, he asked his men to
10 trust him and, in turn, promised to bring them
11 home safe. Ten of his men were killed on the night
12 of March 18, 1968. Paul W. “Bud” Bucha ulti-
13 mately accepted the Medal of Honor in their mem-
14 ory, saying it belongs to his men.

15 (11) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha resigned his Army
16 commission in 1972.

17 (12) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha was an active mem-
18 ber of several veterans service organizations (com-
19 monly referred to as “VSOs”), including the Amer-
20 ican Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled
21 American Veterans, and the Vietnam Veterans of
22 America. He generously served on the board of di-
23 rectors of Homes for Our Troops, a VSO that builds
24 specially adapted custom homes for severely injured
25 veterans. He also served as Chairman of the Advi-

1 sory Committee on Veterans Employment and
2 Training Services at the Department of Labor.

3 (13) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha used his voice for
4 veterans struggling with mental health. He believed
5 that all veterans, whether they have “four stars or
6 no stripes, man or woman”, would be touched by
7 post-traumatic stress. He used the term “post-trau-
8 matic stress” to acknowledge the impact of combat
9 experiences on the mental health of veterans and he
10 intentionally left out the word “disorder” to help
11 destigmatize their struggle.

12 (14) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha battled post-trau-
13 matic stress on his own for 42 years before coura-
14 geously seeking help at the medical center of the De-
15 partment of Veterans Affairs in West Haven, Con-
16 necticut. In the final years of his life, Paul W.
17 “Bud” Bucha also received neurological care at that
18 medical center. His family expressed deep gratitude
19 for the compassionate and skilled care he received,
20 especially recognizing the leadership of Dr. Huned
21 Patwa, Chief of Staff, and Dr. Becky Rhoads, Exec-
22 utive Director. His family also commended the dedi-
23 cated neurologists, psychiatrists, and oncologists who
24 supported him as his health declined.

1 (15) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha spent the last two
 2 weeks of his life at the medical center of the Depart-
 3 ment in West Haven, Connecticut, and passed away
 4 from complications of Alzheimer’s disease on July
 5 31, 2024. In his final act of courage and service, he
 6 donated his brain to the Center for Human Brain
 7 Discovery at Yale University.

8 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF CAPTAIN PAUL W. “BUD” BUCHA**
 9 **VA MEDICAL CENTER.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The medical center of the Depart-
 11 ment of Veterans Affairs in West Haven, Connecticut, or
 12 any successor location for such medical center, shall after
 13 the date of the enactment of this Act be known and des-
 14 ignated as the “Captain Paul W. ‘Bud’ Bucha Depart-
 15 ment of Veterans Affairs Medical Center” or the “Captain
 16 Paul W. ‘Bud’ Bucha VA Medical Center”.

17 (b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regula-
 18 tion, map, document, paper, or other record of the United
 19 States to the medical center referred to in subsection (a)
 20 shall be considered to be a reference to the Captain Paul
 21 W. “Bud” Bucha VA Medical Center.

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