

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2682

AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha was born on August
7 1, 1943, in Washington, DC.

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

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

14 (4) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha turned down several
15 scholarships for both academics and athletics and in-
16 stead enrolled in the United States Military Acad-
17 emy at West Point, New York. He went on to be a
18 two-time All-American and captain of the West
19 Point swim team. In 1965, he graduated in the top
20 5 percent of his class and number two in Military
21 Order of Merit.

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

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

5 (7) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha was appointed com-
6 mander of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infan-
7 try Regiment. His company was the last rifle com-
8 pany to be formed during an Army expansion. He
9 jokingly recalled that his recruits were men who had
10 flunked basic infantry tasks, former prisoners, and
11 “guys with master’s degrees in Elizabethan lit-
12 erature”. He took pride in his company, dubbed the
13 “clerks and jerks”. They went on to become one of
14 the most decorated units by the end of the war.

15 (8) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha distinguished him-
16 self with extraordinary heroism while leading 89
17 men on a reconnaissance mission near Phuoc Vinh,
18 Vietnam, from March 16th through 18th, 1968. As
19 part of the Tet Offensive, his unit was dropped by
20 helicopter and his men set out to repel attacks by
21 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. As the sun
22 set on March 18, 1968, he and his men advanced
23 into a dense jungle and found themselves outgunned
24 by approximately 1,500 enemy troops. Under attack,
25 he crawled 40 yards through the hail of fire and sin-

1 glehandedly destroyed a machine-gun bunker with
2 grenades, all while sustaining a shrapnel wound. He
3 then orchestrated an overnight offensive, directing
4 his men to spread out, throw grenades, and unleash
5 heavy fire. He made the enemy believe they were a
6 much larger force. His leadership led to the defeat
7 of a superior Vietnamese stronghold, leaving 156
8 enemy dead. Come morning, he guided the medical
9 evacuation of three air-ambulance loads of seriously
10 wounded personnel.

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

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

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

24 (12) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha was an active mem-
25 ber of several veterans service organizations (com-

1 monly referred to as “VSOs”), including the Amer-
 2 ican Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled
 3 American Veterans, and the Vietnam Veterans of
 4 America. He generously served on the board of di-
 5 rectors of Homes for Our Troops, a VSO that builds
 6 specially adapted custom homes for severely injured
 7 veterans. He also served as Chairman of the Advi-
 8 sory Committee on Veterans Employment and
 9 Training Services at the Department of Labor.

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

19 (14) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha battled post-trau-
 20 matic stress on his own for 42 years before coura-
 21 geously seeking help at the medical center of the De-
 22 partment of Veterans Affairs in West Haven, Con-
 23 necticut. In the final years of his life, Paul W.
 24 “Bud” Bucha also received neurological care at that
 25 medical center. His family expressed deep gratitude

1 for the compassionate and skilled care he received,
 2 especially recognizing the leadership of Dr. Huned
 3 Patwa, Chief of Staff, and Dr. Becky Rhoads, Exec-
 4 utive Director. His family also commended the dedi-
 5 cated neurologists, psychiatrists, and oncologists who
 6 supported him as his health declined.

7 (15) Paul W. “Bud” Bucha spent the last two
 8 weeks of his life at the medical center of the Depart-
 9 ment in West Haven, Connecticut, and passed away
 10 from complications of Alzheimer’s disease on July
 11 31, 2024. In his final act of courage and service, he
 12 donated his brain to the Center for Human Brain
 13 Discovery at Yale University.

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

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

23 (b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regula-
 24 tion, map, document, paper, or other record of the United
 25 States to the medical center referred to in subsection (a)

- 1 shall be considered to be a reference to the Captain Paul
- 2 W. “Bud” Bucha VA Medical Center.

Passed the Senate August 2, 2025.

Attest:

Secretary.

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