

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 2682

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## 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

for the compassionate and skilled care he received, especially recognizing the leadership of Dr. Huned Patwa, Chief of Staff, and Dr. Becky Rhoads, Executive Director. His family also commended the dedicated neurologists, psychiatrists, and oncologists who supported him as his health declined.

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

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

(a) IN GENERAL.—The medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in West Haven, Connecticut, or any successor location for such medical center, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “Captain Paul W. ‘Bud’ Bucha Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center” or the “Captain Paul W. ‘Bud’ Bucha VA Medical Center”.

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United 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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