

Washington, D.C. — Congressman Allen West, R-Fla., was tapped for the Guardian of Seniors' Rights award by the 60 Plus Association, a national organization that advocates lower taxes and adherence to the Constitution, according to a statement from West's office.

Now in its 19th year, 60 Plus, viewed as the conservative alternative to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), presents Guardian awards each Congress to Democrats and Republicans, based on their "pro-senior" views and legislative initiatives.

"As seniors, we felt we should show our gratitude to dedicated lawmakers like Rep. Allen West who show compassion towards the elderly by pledging to 1) always protect Medicare, 2) always protect Social Security, and 3) just as importantly, to vote against wasteful spending of our tax dollars, excessive spending that has our government now borrowing over 40 cents of every dollar it needs to pay its bills," 60 Plus Chairman Jim Martin said in the statement. "Seniors have to balance their budgets and so should our government," Martin said.

During an award ceremony in the nation's capital, Martin cited West for his "commitment to look out for America's greatest generation, as well as the congressman's promise to always work to preserve Medicare and Social Security for future retirees, our children and grandchildren."

Martin said 7.1 million seniors support his organization and West had "earned our respect and our appreciation." Meanwhile, West, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and a 22-year U.S. Army veteran, has announced the names of members of the Veterans Advisory Committee and has held his first meeting with them.

The panel is comprised of Craig Carr, Connie Christensen, Roy Foster, Phillip Greenberg, Ed Greenfield, Mary Ann Hedrick, Jerry Klein, Bill Kling, Mishelle Kochel, Richard Little, Mark Llano, John Mac, William J. McConnell Sr., Giovanni Ocampo, Charley Price, Hank Rivera, Sherrill Valdes and Loretta Young.

An announcement from West's office said the committee consists of veterans who served in the Armed Forces from World War II to the military actions in Iraq and "represent several veterans advocacy groups throughout South Florida."

The committee "will serve an important role in helping Congressman West bring issues to the attention of the United States Congress," the statement said.