

*Sponsors "Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights" to halt industry abuses*

Burlington, VT - At a roundtable with consumer and business representatives, Rep. Peter Welch announced he is co-sponsoring legislation to protect Vermonters from abusive credit card practices.

Welch was joined at the roundtable by John Adams of Fair Haven, Eliot Burg from the Vermont Attorney General's Office, Chris D'Elia with the Vermont Bankers Association, Scott Falzo from Rockingham Shell, Jim Harrison from the Vermont Grocers' Association, and Representative Warren Kitzmiller of Montpelier, chairman of the House Commerce Committee and former owner of Onion River Sports in Montpelier.

With Welch moderating, the roundtable participants discussed issues of consumer interest, including unexpected interest rate hikes and marketing gimmicks, as well as the burden businesses are facing with increasing merchants fees charged by credit card companies.

"I am hearing from more and more Vermonters and small business owners who are fed up with the unfair bait and switch practices of credit card companies. Vermonters want to pay their bills but they don't want to be hoodwinked into higher interest rates and into a quagmire of debt. And our small businesses accepting credit cards have a right to know the rules of the game in plain English," said Welch.

Welch added, "At a time when Vermonters are already feeling a financial pinch, it's time to require fair play and transparency, and put an end to these gouging tactics. The Cardholders' Bill of Rights requires simple fairness all consumers deserve."

Adams, a victim of unexpected credit card rate hikes, commented "Like most Vermonters, I pay my bills and use a credit card for convenience. I had no idea my rate changed from 7.99 to 26 percent until it had passed the point at which I could pay off the balance under the terms. I don't want other Vermonters to go through what I experienced."

The Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, authored by House Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY):

- Protects cardholders against arbitrary interest rate increases
- Prevents cardholders who pay on time from being unfairly penalized
- Protects cardholders from due date gimmicks
- Shields cardholders from misleading terms
- Empowers cardholders to set limits on their credit
- Requires card companies to fairly credit and allocate payments
- Prohibits card companies from imposing excessive fees on cardholders
- Prevents card companies from giving subprime credit cards to people who can't afford them
- Requires Congress to provide better oversight of the credit card industry
- Contains NO rate caps, fee setting, or price controls

A full summary of the bill can be found by [clicking here](#) .