

[By John Gregg, Valley News](#)

Give U.S. Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., credit for being ready and willing to talk to his constituents on health care. Welch held a statewide "Telephone Town Hall on health care reform" Monday night.

And he even robocalled Vermont residents, inviting them to hang onto the line and listen in on the call. (A certain weary reporter, finally home, listened for a minute, then decided to see what beer was in the fridge).

But a lot of Vermonters stuck with it. More than 2,400 residents listened for between 5 and 20 minutes of the forum, and 520 hung with it for more than 40 minutes. Twenty of the callers asked questions on the call, according to Welch's office.

Welch spokesman Paul Heintz said the Hartland Democrat held the forum after the unveiling of House leaders' final health-care reform bill last week.

"The Congressman wanted to provide an additional opportunity to discuss the changes and answer any last-minute questions that folks have," Heintz said.

Welch has held six telephone town halls since health-care reform became a live issue in the House this year, and he's also held well-attended forums in person, including a session last month in White River Junction.