

Rep. Peter Welch supported and the House passed Monday night several bills to support disabled veterans.

The legislation provides support for family members who care for disabled veterans, increases compensation to certain veterans, and facilitates research programs at Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers.

"I have long believed that the cost of the war should include the cost of caring for the warrior," Welch said. "With these measures, we are providing much-needed assistance to disabled veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country, and we are recognizing the commitment of their family members and caregivers." The Caregiver Assistance and Resource Enhancement Act (H.R. 3155) establishes a caregiver program to help family and non-family members who provide care for disabled, ill or injured veterans. The program provides education sessions for improved care-giving, counseling and respite care to the family caregiver, or another individual designated by the veteran - and it provides a financial stipend and medical care to caregivers of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Veterans' Insurance and Health Care Improvements Act of 2009 (H.R. 3219) extends life insurance coverage for totally disabled veterans, prohibits the VA from collecting copayments from catastrophically disabled veterans, and gives the VA authority to provide care for Vietnam-era and Persian Gulf veterans who have insufficient medical evidence to establish a service-connected disability.

The Veterans Nonprofit Research and Education Corporations Enhancement Act of 2009 (H.R. 2770) extends the ability of certain non-profit institutions to facilitate the conduct of research or education at VA medical centers.

Later in the week, the House is also expected to pass the Disabled Veterans Home Improvement and Structural Alteration Grant Increase Act (H.R. 1293), which provides increased assistance to veterans with service-connected disabilities to modify their homes to suit their medical needs.