

Rep. Peter Welch this week supported a series of bills intended to improve services and benefits for veterans.

Welch today supported and the House passed the Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act of 2009 (H.R. 2990). The bill allows severely disabled veterans to concurrently receive their retiree pay from the Department of Defense and disability benefits from the Veterans Administration.

Yesterday, Welch voted for and the House passed the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009 (H.R. 1016), which requires Congress to approve Veterans Administration budgets two years in advance. For 19 of the past 22 years, VA appropriations bills have been approved late, leading to a shortage of funding for veterans' services. This bill, which Welch cosponsored, ensures timely, sufficient and predictable funding for the VA - and it is a top priority for veterans service organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

The House also passed the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009 (S. 407) with Welch's support. This bill increases the rates of veterans' disability compensation and dependent compensation as of December 1, 2009.

Lastly, Welch supported and the House passed the Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act (H.R. 1211), which expands and improves health care services available to women veterans, especially those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I'm pleased to support this common-sense legislation, which will help veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country," Welch said. "These bills will ensure we fund veterans' services in a timely manner, provide adequate compensation and support the brave women who have served our country."