

Rep. Peter Welch supported and the House passed the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, of which he is a cosponsor, Thursday afternoon. The vote was 357 to 70.

The bill provides some basic fairness to credit cardholders long resisted by card issuers by applying common sense regulations that would ban most retroactive interest rate hikes on existing balances, double-cycle billing and due date gimmicks. It protects cardholders from arbitrary interest rate increases, empowers them to set limits on their credit and requires card companies to fairly credit and allocate payments.

"This is an important first step toward our goal of providing consumers with the protection they deserve. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go before we achieve the full reform consumers demand from abusive credit card companies," Welch said.

Welch led the charge this week to amend the bill in two ways. First, he called on the House to cap credit card interest rates at 18 percent. Second, he called for increased transparency and oversight of the fees those companies charge merchants. In the face of significant opposition from the credit card industry, neither amendment received enough support to pass.

"While we made serious strides today in our efforts to fight unfair and abusive practices leveled at consumers and small businesses, our work has only just begun," Welch said. "I intend to continue building support for the initiatives we proposed, and I will not back down until we achieve them."

[Click here](#) for video of Rep. Welch speaking in favor of the bill on the House floor.