

With Rep. Peter Welch's support, the U.S. House passed legislation late Monday that will improve the delivery of veterans benefits, assist in retraining unemployed veterans and make it easier for military families to relocate when transferred.

The three bills passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support.

"This common sense legislation strengthens our commitment to veterans and military families," Welch said. "By assisting those who have served our country so admirably, we are fulfilling our promise to the best and bravest among us.

The Veterans Small Business Assistance and Servicemembers Protection Act (H.R. 3949) will make a series of improvements to veterans' and servicemembers' benefit programs. The bill strengthens the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to protect military families from foreclosure and eviction, and it relieves soldiers deploying overseas from early termination fees on car and home leases. The bill expands outreach from the VA to ensure that veterans receive the benefits they have earned and improves enforcement of programs that assist veteran-owned small businesses.

The Military Spouses Residency Relief Act (S. 475) gives military spouses the ability to keep their previous residency when moving from one station to another, eliminating the need to change vehicle and voter registrations and to file tax returns for multiple states with each move. Already passed by the Senate, the bill will now be sent to President Obama for his signature.

The Veterans Retraining Act (H.R. 1168) provides a stipend and moving assistance to veterans who have been unemployed for at least 4 months and are not eligible for VA retraining and education because they are enrolled in a U.S. Department of Labor retraining program.