With Rep. Peter Welch's support, the U.S. House passed legislation late Wednesday investing in firefighter assistance programs. The bill passed by a bipartisan vote of 395 to 31.

The Fire Grants Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3791) would authorize $2.2 billion in grants through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program. Both have historically provided critical funding to Vermont's fire departments.

"Vermont's firefighters are the bedrock of every community in the state," Welch said. "This legislation ensures that Vermont's career and volunteer fire departments – squeezed by ever-tightening budgets – can continue to provide the vital protection our communities require."