

[By Bob Kinzel](#)

(Host) All three members of Vermont's Congressional delegation say President Obama's plan to reduce the federal deficit by \$3 trillion over the next 10 years is a balanced approach to deal with a serious fiscal issue.

But because the proposal faces strong Republican opposition, they question if it has a chance of being passed by Congress.

VPR's Bob Kinzel reports.

(Kinzel) The President's plan raises roughly \$1.5 trillion in new tax revenue primarily from wealthy people and corporations.

It eliminates the so called Bush tax cuts for people who make more than a million dollars a year and it caps tax deductions for families who make more than \$250,000. The proposal also closes tax loopholes for oil and gas companies.

The plan reduces spending on health care and entitlement programs by \$580 billion and it saves a trillion dollars by ending U.S. military missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Senator Patrick Leahy is a senior member of the Senate Appropriations committee. He says the President has put together a good plan.

(Leahy) "I think he is very much on the right track. I remember when Bill Clinton did something similar to this we ended up balancing the budget, creating a huge surplus, creating millions of jobs, and the irony is even though they pay slightly more taxes, the multi-millionaires and the big corporations made a lot more money because the economy grew a lot more."

(Kinzel) And Leahy says the plan draws a clear distinction between the policies of Democrats and the Republicans.

(Leahy) "Ask the average American: would you like to see the budget get balanced, would you like to see us grow jobs or would you like to give more tax breaks to the oil companies, more tax breaks to those who are shipping your jobs overseas and more tax breaks to people who are making millions of dollars a year?"

(Kinzel) Congressman Peter Welch says the plan is a fair combination of new tax revenue and budget cuts.

(Welch) "It's a balanced approach. He's challenging the Democrats telling us 'hey, we have to have some skin in the game'. It means we've got to be willing to accept some cuts and he's challenging the Republicans to try to commit themselves to cleaning up a mess of the tax code and get some revenues in."

(Kinzel) And Welch strongly supports the provision that reduces funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

(Welch) "It indicates that as far as the budget goes he's going to be more aggressive in bringing our troops home from Afghanistan and that's very important for us - both on budget levels and also because it's a sensible national security decision."

(Kinzel) In a prepared statement, Senator Bernie Sanders said he supports the President's tax policies and the decision not to make any changes to Social Security or the eligibility age of Medicare.

For VPR News, I'm Bob Kinzel in Montpelier.