By Deanna LeBlanc

A Vermont program that helps veterans and active duty service members run their own businesses is getting support to spread nationwide.

In a press conference Monday in Rutland, Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt) announced his plans to expand the program that assists military members in starting and running businesses upon return from a deployment. Welch has taken three trips to Afghanistan in recent years and says he was inspired by what he saw there to support the program back home.

"I saw these soldiers and how smart they were, how hardworking they were, how determined they were -- skills that demonstrate an enormous ability to be successful in civilian life here, so I think our job is to make sure that they've got that shot," he said.

The program has already been passed in the House, and Welch says he is hopeful the Senate will do the same.