

[By Steve Zind, Vermont Public Radio](#)

(Host) Vermont Congressman Peter Welch says he's hopeful that a compromise can be struck between the House and Senate health care bills.

The house passed a bill in November that includes the so-called public option, which would compete with insurance companies.

The Senate bill, which is expected to pass later this week, doesn't contain that provision.

Speaking on VPR's Vermont Edition, Welch said the public option is essential to controlling health care costs.

(Welch) "It was a real tool for cost containment, for choice for the consumer and for lower prices. The Senate bill was unsuccessful in the public option and they're trying to control costs by regulating insurance companies. That's a good thing to do but probably not enough."

(Host) Welch says it's too early to tell what compromises House and Senate conference committees can reach in light of the substantial differences between the two health care bills.

He concedes there's a chance the final bill will look more like the Senate bill than the one that he voted for in the House.

(Welch) "When the final vote comes, I have to make a judgment, consulting with Vermonters whether the better course is to vote 'yes' or 'no'. Senator Leahy has to do that, Senator Sanders has to do it, but until then I'm going to work as hard as I can to improve that bill."

VPR: "Welch Hopeful For Health Care Compromise"

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(Host) Congressional Democrats hope to have a final bill for the President's signature by the State of the Union address in early January.