The House today passed legislation sponsored by Rep. Peter Welch mandating responsible spending. The vote was 265 to 166.

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2009 (H.R. 2920) puts the force of law behind current House rules requiring lawmakers to pay for new programs, either by cutting spending or increasing revenue. During the 1990s when similar rules were enacted, PAYGO helped turn massive deficits into record surpluses.

"This law will impose fiscal discipline on the legislative process, forcing lawmakers to kick the tires of existing programs to find savings before approving new programs," Welch said. "Vermonters and families across the country already live by these rules. They work hard to pay their bills and keep their checkbooks balanced. The federal government has a responsibility to do the same."

Upon taking office in 2007, one of Welch's first votes was to reestablish PAYGO in House rules. The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act takes the next step, giving those rules the force of law and helping to rein in record deficits. Welch joined President Obama at an East Room press conference in June when the president unveiled the legislation.

Welch spoke in favor of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act today on the House floor. Click here to watch his speech.