

A bill authored by Rep. Peter Welch to help veterans find work and receive job training was passed by a House Veterans Affairs subcommittee Thursday.

The Military Transition Program (MTP) Act H.R. 929, which Welch first introduced in the 110th Congress, builds upon the success of the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act, which helped veterans in the 1990s find work during a period of force reduction.

"As Vermont prepares for the return of 1,400 Guard members from Afghanistan, we have an obligation to make sure they come back to good jobs and quality job training programs," Welch said. "Building upon past successes, this legislation will support those who have fought for our country, as well as those who recognize the value of hiring veterans."

Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor, MTP is a pilot program that would partner with businesses to fund on-the-job training for veterans. The program would defray the costs of training by providing up to 50 percent of a veteran's wages during training. The Congressional Budget office estimates that the MTP pilot would provide 500 veterans a year the skills they need to compete.

The program would be available to veterans not currently eligible for training or education benefits and who are unemployed or underemployed.

In the last Congress, a version of MTP was incorporated into H.R. 6221, which was passed by the House. The Senate did not take up the bill. The current version of the bill, H.R. 929, now moves to the full Committee on Veterans Affairs for consideration.