Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.) released the following statement late Tuesday in response to President Obama's State of the Union address:

"Tonight, President Obama set the right tone for the new Congress. He said what Vermonters have always known: political progress requires even the most intense debates to be civil and respectful.

"The President identified the essential American challenge: creating jobs by restoring American competitiveness. Doing so will require a focus on job creation and deficit reduction, both of which must be accomplished if either is to be achieved.

"To create new jobs, we must rebuild our aging infrastructure and invest in energy efficiency. As the President said, 'We need to out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world.'

"And to ensure the stability and sustainability of our economy, we must get our fiscal house in order. We must, however, accomplish this without forcing middle- and low-income Americans to bear a disproportionate share of the burden."