

Rep. Peter Welch last week presented Warren resident Susan Russell with the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus' Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award.

Susan Russell was a victim of a tragic assault that nearly took her life. She has spent more than a decade since serving as a voice for victims in her community and across Vermont and the nation. Her advocacy on behalf of victims has included work to improve collection of DNA evidence, community notification and Vermont's sex offender registry. Last year, she testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee about the importance of the Victims of Crime Act.

"Susan's story of triumphing against adversity to better the lives of thousands is remarkable," said Welch. "While few of us can imagine the trauma she experienced, we can all take inspiration from her spirit. I am very pleased to present her with this much-deserved award."

The annual award is named for Eva Murillo, who pioneered efforts in California to help women in abusive relationships. It is given to a crime victim who has overcome tragedy by promoting victims' service programs and increasing awareness of victims' rights and needs.

Senator Patrick Leahy also wrote to the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus in support of Susan Russell.