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(Host) Congressman Peter Welch is part of a bipartisan group that wants the federal deficit to be cut by raising new revenue, as well as reforming entitlement programs.

The coalition says the congressional super committee charged with finding \$1.2 trillion in deficit reduction should recommend a plan that addresses the problem for the next decade.

VPR's Bob Kinzel reports.

(Kinzel) At a time when many political issues in Washington are highly partisan, Welch says it's important that 100 of his House colleagues - 60 Democrats and 40 Republicans - were willing to sign a letter asking that everything be put on the table to help reduce the federal budget deficit:

(Welch) "So you had Democrats acknowledging that all our programs have to be on the table, but the Republicans who signed that acknowledge revenues have to be part of it. To get from where we are to where we need to be we have to a) work together and b) have everything on the table."

(Kinzel) The Super Committee has two and a half weeks to agree on a plan to reduce the federal deficit by \$1.2 trillion over the next decade.

Welch's coalition thinks that goal is too small.

(Welch) "We're advocating to the super committee that they be ambitious; that they have a \$4 trillion goal over ten years. In our view, those of us who signed the letter, it's that going big and bold actually makes it easier because then all of us have to share this burden of sacrifice."

(Kinzel) Will this coalition have much influence on the budget deficit process? Retired Middlebury College political science professor Eric Davis says the answer is yes if they're able to attract a few more members.

(Davis) "I would say the challenge for Welch and his colleagues over the next couple of weeks until the deadline for the super committee to report is to try and get that 100 up to 150 or so. For once you're up to a third of the House then I think you have a group of members that can be taken seriously in terms of its weight in terms of votes."

(Kinzel) And Davis says the coalition is sending an important message to leaders of Congress and President Obama:

(Davis) "That there is a group of members if it were 150 somewhat over a third of the House of Representatives who's willing to look seriously at both revenue increases and entitlement reform as part of a long term long scale deficit reduction package."

(Kinzel) Looming over the negotiations is a provision that calls for automatic budget cuts if the Super Committee is unable to reach agreement by Thanksgiving, or if they back a plan, but Congress fails to adopt it by the end of the year.

For VPR News, I'm Bob Kinzel in Montpelier.