

[By Neal Goswami](#)

The U.S. House approved legislation Wednesday that would grant the president line-item veto power and help control spending, according to proponents.

Vermont's Democratic Rep. Peter Welch, a co-sponsor of the Expedited Legislative Line-Item Veto and Rescissions Act, said granting that authority to the president will shed more light on sometimes questionable elements that are included in budgets.

"In my view, if you put the light of day on some of these items, then members of congress will have to think clearly about them," Welch said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

The House voted 254 to 173 to approve the line-item veto power. The bill garnered bipartisan support for an authority that has previously been deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The court ruled in 1998 that the line-item veto power utilized by former President Bill Clinton violated the constitutional provision that only Congress holds the power of the purse.

Welch and other proponents said the bill approved by the House Wednesday address that concern. Under the legislation, the president can reject objectionable spending provisions contained in large appropriations bills. But, Congress must then hold an expedited up-or-down vote on each item rejected by the president.

"This line-item veto retains the Congressional power of the purse. It doesn't designate the final say to the president," Welch said. "It allows for real accountability. That was the common ground. Members of Congress support the constitutional provision that the Congress has the power of the purse."

Welch said he would not support any line-item veto authority for the president that does provide Congress with the final say.

The legislation now heads to the Senate for its consideration. Its prospects there remain uncertain. The White House, meanwhile, has expressed its support.