

[By Jenna Pizzi](#)

Rep. Peter Welch and his staff maneuvered their way around the Main Street detour on Friday afternoon to meet with locals about the political issues that matter most to them.

While the discussion was a real potpourri, the main points Welch made were not to put pressure on his congressional colleagues, but on the Supreme Court.

"Our Supreme Court has gotten some things right," said Welch as he stood before a crowd of 30 in Espresso Bueno. "But they have got some big things wrong."

One of the big things Welch is pointing to includes the court's Citizens United decision, which equated money with speech and corporations with people. He said that decision is to blame for the ongoing Republican primary and smattering of negative advertising put on by candidate's super PACs.

Because of this, Welch said he is wary of the high court's upcoming decision regarding President Obama's health care reform bill, which was passed two years ago.

"I can't predict what they will do," said Welch.

Welch said it is important that the president's bill is not overturned by the court, because it will play a pivotal role in helping states like Vermont in the push for a single-payer model.

"It is a necessary tool to help us make that change," said Welch.

No matter what decision the court comes to, Welch said it is too late to change the minds of the people, physicians and medical personnel who realize that it is necessary to make a change to the way health care is run in this country.

"The Supreme Court can't stop the push for health care reform," said Welch. "At the ground level there is no moving back.

While many of the Barre residents who came out to meet the congressman just wanted to hear what he had to say, others came to tout their federally funded programs, pushing for increased or more reliable funding.

Beth Stern, executive director for the Vermont Council on Aging, said that recently with such a battle over budgets in congress it has been difficult for her and the council, which receives federal funding, to operate within their budget for a given fiscal year when the budget isn't passed until the end of that year.

"The not knowing is the worst," said Stern. "If Congress would get their act together and actually pass budgets in a timely way it would be better."

Stern added that Welch has always been an advocate for the council and she is just looking for him to spread the word of the good work they do so that the funding will continue.

For Steve Woodward, a veterans services navigator who helps to run MHISSION-VT, a jail diversion and substance abuse program for veterans, funding is not so much a sure thing.

Woodward's program, which was initially funded by the federal government for five years, runs out in September of 2013 and he is hoping to secure more federal funds to keep the program operating past then.