

[By Susie Steimle](#)

Former Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords started the art competition 31 years ago. Now Congressman Peter Welch has picked up the torch.

One of these images will soon don the halls of the of the United States Capitol building. Congressman Peter Welch says walking past this student artwork on the way to work is one of the best parts of his days in D.C. "Each day I tend to pick out a particular state and try to concentrate and think about that young person who put that there and it's now in the nation's capital for literally hundreds of thousands of people to see," Welch said.

Senator Jim Jeffords started the Congressional Art Competition back in 1981. Welch says he has continued the program in his honor. "He understood that getting kids engaged and expressing themselves in a constructive way was really important for our kids," he said.

Every spring one winner from each state wins a trip to the capital to see their art on display in D.C. This year Vermont's winner is Jacob Jackmauh. "I definitely get inspiration from Rembrandt. He's one of my favorite artists. I like a lot of classical artists, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci," Jackmauh said.

Jackmauh submitted his painting as a last ditch effort. The one he originally intended to submit was ruined, but his second choice was good enough to win him first place. "These kids have talents in art and I don't," Welch said. "So I admire them."

Welch says there isn't enough support for arts in education. He says he's proud to support and push for more programs like this one. "Education is about engaging kids so they understand they've got to put effort into learning one of the ways that you get kids to do that is give them a shot at expressing themselves through art. This is very important. It's very important we support

arts and support education," he said.

The President of the Vermont College of Fine Arts described art to the students Monday as both a mirror and a window, offering others the opportunity to see the world through a different set of eyes.

Vermont's winner, Jacob Jackmauh, was selected from 158 students from 34 schools. Jacob will travel to Washington with his parents in June.