

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
August 10, 2021

## Rep. Welch, Lieutenant Governor Gray, and Advocates Call for Action to Lower Costs and Improve Health Care for all Vermonters

*Rep. Peter Welch, Lieutenant Governor Gray, Health Care Advocates Join Protect Our Care on the Nationwide “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour to Demonstrate the Urgent Need to Make Prescription Drugs Affordable to All*



Burlington, VT- This afternoon Protect Our Care’s “Care Force One” arrived in Burlington to demonstrate the need for lowering Vermont’s health costs, expanding coverage, and reducing healthcare disparities. Headlined by Rep. Peter Welch and Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray, the event highlighted how Democrats are leading the charge to advance American health care and held Republicans accountable for continuing to reject measures to improve care and lower costs for all Vermonters.

### **Read Protect Our Care’s new report: Lower Costs, Better Care for Vermont**

Throughout the nationwide [“Lower Cost, Better Care”](#) bus tour, Protect Our Care is fighting to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation. These priorities include giving Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, getting more Americans covered by closing the Medicaid gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include hearing, dental, and vision, and further reducing health care premiums for millions of Americans who purchase coverage on their own.

**You Can Watch the Event [Here](#).**

"I once got a letter from a Vermonter who said, 'I have a choice between paying for something I cannot afford, or risking a loss that I could never endure.' Life saving medications are only helpful if Americans have the means to access them. Put simply, no one should have to make the impossible choice between affording prescriptions or putting food on their table. Enough is enough. We must expand affordable health care coverage, lower prescription drug prices, and address healthcare disparities within our communities with the urgency this moment demands." said **Congressman Peter Welch (D-VT)**. The congressman's record reflects a strong commitment to bringing people together to find common sense solutions to the difficult challenges facing our state and nation.

"As I've traveled around the state meeting with communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, one thing is clear: this pandemic has not impacted all Vermonters equally and many communities and families remain in crisis," said **Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray**. "Access to health care and life saving prescriptions cannot be on the chopping block for Vermonters, not during a pandemic, not ever," the Lieutenant Governor continued, before celebrating the efforts of Democrats in Congress, who have been working hard to lower drug costs and expand access to care.

"I know what I need to do for my patient, but when they can't afford it, I pull up a coupon — like my grandmother," said **Sarah DeSilvey, ARPN, a primary care provider in rural Vermont**, who described how difficult accessing life saving medications can be for Vermonters. "We see this every single day."

"This tour is giving Americans from all walks of life the opportunity to speak out about the pressing need to lower health care costs and improve care," said **Jayme Simoes from Protect Our Care**. "Vermonters have the right to know whether their elected officials stand by President Biden's agenda to improve health care for millions or if they side with Big Pharma and other special interests. When Congress returns this fall, we have a once in a generation opportunity to transform health care for the American people, including lowering prescription drug prices, closing the Medicaid coverage gap, and further reducing health costs for people purchasing coverage on their own. Care Force One is crisscrossing the country this summer making the case for getting this critical job done."

**Rep. Taylor Small of Pride Center of Vermont** said, "the ability to care for our collective health should never be a question. As we work through the current pandemic, the LGBTQ+ community is still recovering from the HIV/AIDS epidemic here in our nation. We have the tools, medication, and treatments theoretically available and yet our communities cannot access what they need because of outrageous drug costs and inequitable care. It is time for us to learn from our histories and finally come together to declare that healthcare is a human right for all."

"When I was fighting stage 4 cancer, I had to forgo medication that would boost my immune system because the price tag was simply too high," said **Laura Packard**. "I wound up in the

hospital, and nearly died. Sadly, stories like these are all too common in our country. Patients should be able to focus on getting well, not struggling to pay for medications. That's why we need Congress to act now to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of all Americans.”

Tomorrow, “Care Force One” will head to Concord, NH, where Protect Our Care will be joined by Rep. Annie Kuster. For more information, please visit [protectourcare.org/bus-tour/](https://protectourcare.org/bus-tour/).

### **The Protect Our Care “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour is making stops in:**

**Bangor, Maine** on Monday, August 9, 2021  
**Portland, Maine** on Monday, August 9, 2021  
**Burlington, Vermont** on Tuesday, August 10, 2021  
**Concord, New Hampshire** on Wednesday, August 11, 2021  
**Teaneck, New Jersey** on Friday, August 13, 2021  
**Bethlehem, Pennsylvania** on Thursday, August 12, 2021  
**New York, New York** on Friday, August 13, 2021  
**New Brunswick, New Jersey** on Monday, August 16, 2021  
**Scranton, Pennsylvania** on Monday, August 16, 2021  
**Burlington County, New Jersey** on Tuesday, August 17, 2021  
**Wilmington, Delaware** on Tuesday, August 17, 2021  
**Dover, Delaware** on Tuesday, August 17, 2021  
**Morgantown, West Virginia** on Wednesday, August 18, 2021  
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** on Wednesday, August 18, 2021  
**Youngstown, Ohio** on Thursday, August 19, 2021  
**Columbus, Ohio** on Thursday, August 19, 2021  
**Milwaukee, Wisconsin** on Friday, August 20, 2021  
**Madison, Wisconsin** on Friday, August 20, 2021  
**Parkersburg, West Virginia** on Monday, August 23, 2021  
**Charleston, West Virginia** on Monday, August 23, 2021  
**Raleigh, North Carolina** on Tuesday, August 24, 2021  
**Charlotte, North Carolina** on Tuesday, August 24, 2021  
**Columbia, South Carolina** on Tuesday, August 24, 2021  
**Atlanta, Georgia** on Wednesday, August 25, 2021  
**Savannah, Georgia** on Wednesday, August 25, 2021  
**Orlando, Florida** on Thursday, August 26, 2021  
**Tampa, Florida** on Thursday, August 26, 2021  
**Denver, Colorado** on Monday, August 30, 2021  
**Flagstaff, Arizona** on Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
**Phoenix, Arizona** on Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
**Tucson, Arizona** on Wednesday, September 1, 2021  
**San Diego, California** on Thursday, September 2, 2021  
**Anaheim, California** on Thursday, September 2, 2021  
**Las Vegas, Nevada** on Friday, September 3, 2021