

# VERMONT CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SCORNS VERMONTERS

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For immediate release

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“The current Vermont Congressional delegation is busy representing the military industrial complex’s pet boondoggle, the [F-35](#) Joint Strike Fighter, rather than Vermont voters who don’t want a nuclear bomber in this state,” said Congressional candidate Ben Mitchell on Tuesday. Mitchell, a self-described Democratic socialist, is challenging incumbent Rep. Peter Welch in the Democratic primary on August 14.



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*Ben Mitchell*

Welch, along with Vermont Senators Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders, issued a joint statement late Monday affirming their support for basing the F-35 in South Burlington even though Burlington voters voted at Town Meeting to ask the Air Force to base the nuclear bomber in some other state. Burlington owns the airport in South Burlington, but South Burlington has no voice in the decision.

The F-35 is the world’s most expensive nuclear weapons delivery system, expected to cost \$1.5 trillion over the life of the plane. It’s already cost more than \$400 billion. Of those built so far by Lockheed Martin, almost half aren’t able to fly.

“Bad enough that this is Senator Leahy’s pet project, pushed through by political brute force and a refusal to hold public hearings or meet with opponents or even offer any cogent reason why Vermont should be the victim of this weapon of mass destruction, but it mystifies that Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch would be in lockstep with the militarists, especially after the only public vote on this plane clearly rejected it,” Mitchell said.

Burlington voters approved a Town meeting resolution with 55% of the vote asking the Air Force to base the F-35 somewhere else. The Burlington City Council voted 9-3 on Monday to ask the Air

Force to base the F-35 elsewhere.

“The F-35 is a monstrous war machine that is totally inappropriate for Vermont, and that’s been obvious for years,” Mitchell added. “I have never supported it and now that voters have been allowed to have a say, I don’t see why any other honest elected official would put the Pentagon and Lockheed ahead of Vermont.”

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