

This past week, I joined with members of both the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees in a letter to the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, urging him to utilize the "reserve funds" he imbedded in the House Budget Resolution to pay for key benefits that were promised to and are so rightfully deserved by America's military personnel and their families, retirees, and veterans.

This is an opportunity to finally fund concurrent receipt for disabled veterans, eliminate the Widow's Tax and improve healthcare coverage for our reservists, all without adding a penny to the deficit. I want to ensure that the Government honors its end of the relationship with our servicemen and women and will continue to promote this issue in the coming weeks.

Additionally, Congress is concluding work on the supplemental funding for our troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the type of legislation that should be focused on our commitments overseas to our men and women in uniform. However, in typical Washington fashion, some in Congress are attempting to turn a bill for the troops into a free for all of unrelated, controversial spending and public policies.

I am very concerned about the attempts by some to take advantage of this critical legislation and turn it into a wish list of items which should be debated and voted on their own merits. This bill has dire consequences for our men and women in uniform serving on the front lines and is not the place for political game playing. I will continue to be a voice of opposition to these "inside the beltway" activities, and be a leader on common sense solutions instead of political gamesmanship.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*