

I am deeply disappointed that Congressional leaders chose to include unrelated spending in the War Supplemental. The final version of the bill cut \$4.6 billion from original troop funding levels in order to bailout foreign governments and help buy up old gas guzzling cars. If Congress wanted a vote on "Cash for Clunkers" or funding for the International Monetary Fund, then those programs should have stood on their own merit. At the very least, we shouldn't have been playing partisan political games with money intended for troops on the front lines. Our service members deserve better than this from Congress and I could not in good conscience support the legislation.

Meanwhile, the healthcare debate in Congress continues to gain steam. This past week, I joined my colleagues on the Health Care Solutions Group to outline our comprehensive health care reform legislation. Last fall, I formed the First District Health Care Advisory Committee to work on crafting ways to reform our healthcare system. This committee includes healthcare providers and organizations, as well as those involved in healthcare coverage efforts all over Virginia's First District. Their insight and expertise have been invaluable and many of their ideas are reflected in the proposal put forth by the Solutions Group.

The plan we outlined this week will make health care more affordable, reduce the number of uninsured and increase the quality of care in America. Furthermore, it will ensure that choices are made between a patient and their doctor, that people who like their current level of care can keep it, and that coverage is accessible to every American. By working with a wide range of individuals, I believe we have crafted a solution that can gain bipartisan support and look forward to promoting it in the coming weeks.

*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.*