

Just this past Thursday, the unemployment rate rose to a 26-year high of 9.5%, with a total loss of 467,000 jobs across America. Here in the First District, unemployment rates hover around 8%. While we are faring better than many parts of the U.S., the rate of unemployment is cause for much concern.

I am committed to free market economic principles that will stimulate the economy without over involvement of government in the private sector. Common sense initiatives, like bringing broadband to rural areas and providing tax breaks for capital expenditures, will create jobs by providing infrastructure and incentives for businesses to expand. I will continue to support legislation in Congress to help small businesses. These incubators of the American entrepreneurial spirit create 70% of new jobs each year and will play a large role in our nation's recovery.

Additionally, I recently worked successfully with members from across the aisle to authorize funding for a pilot program for two telework centers in the Washington Metropolitan Area. These centers will accommodate classified information on secure networks and provide a direct benefit to workers in these fields from the First District. Currently, employees handling classified material can do so only in certain designated secure areas. I also strongly support legislation that would allow federal employees to telework at least 20 percent of the hours worked in every two administrative workweeks.

I am also preparing to host a job fair on September 14th in Fredericksburg. This event will feature hiring agencies from both the government and private sector. Our District has a substantial pool of skilled workers who will no doubt benefit from the opportunity to connect directly with prospective employers. For more information about this event, visit <http://wittman.house.gov/> in the coming weeks.

I look forward to returning to Washington this week and pursuing initiatives that will promote economic growth. Congress must ensure that the legislation we enact fosters a favorable environment in which businesses of all sizes can grow and prosper.

*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.*