

First and foremost, no matter which side people are on in the discussion, coming out and talking to their elected officials is an important part of the political process. It's only by making your voices heard, that you will be able to shape the proceedings on Capitol Hill; and I'm here to listen. Moreover, each event was a testament to the civility and thoughtfulness of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Our events were not struck by the same hostility and rudeness exhibited in other parts of the country.

In fact, one gentlemen at Warsaw came to the microphone to ask a question and said, "Mr. Wittman, I came here tonight to throw some rhetorical bombs, but after reading your 13 points (for healthcare reform) I realized, we're not that far apart". You know, he's right, most Americans aren't that far apart on what healthcare reform should mean: cutting costs by enacting tort reform, allowing folks to buy insurance across state lines, and not barring people from purchasing insurance when they have preexisting conditions.

We all agree that we must accomplish health care reform and when Congress comes back into session from the District Work Period next week, we ought to do our part for recycling, place the current bill in the bin, pull out a blank sheet of paper, and start over. Members from both sides of the aisle should come together and start with what we agree on as a basis for reform - that is reducing costs of health care coverage, preserving both the choice of health care coverage and the relationship between the patient and their doctor and focusing on providing coverage for the 15 million that are chronically uninsured.

True bipartisanship means both sides coming to the table and the ideas of everyone being considered in coming to an agreement. Each side might not get what they want, but the American people will have a win in a sector of our economy which is increasing by 1% of GDP each year. I'm committed to making this idea a reality when I return to Washington, and I hope my colleagues will join me.

*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.*