

While some would say we've prosecuted many dangerous criminals here, these individuals bring a unique set of issues and security considerations. That is why we have constructed a state-of-the-art facility at Guantanamo Bay to effectively handle and prosecute detainees, ensure the safety of the participants, and limit the effects on any of our citizens at home. Already, New York Sen. Chuck Schumer has requested \$75 million in new security funds to adequately protect the area surrounding the trials. In a time of record breaking deficits, how many more costs can we expect from this decision?

In addition, I'm concerned that Congress' and the Administration's previous approval of the Military Commissions Act has been side-stepped. Those terrorists who attacked the USS Cole, U.S. embassies, and other military targets around the world should be prosecuted using the Military Commissions. Any attack by foreign nationals upon the United States is an act of war and all should be prosecuted equally using the approved Military Commissions, not civilian courts that are designed to adjudicate violations of United States criminal and civil laws. We risk not only the handing over of sensitive intelligence as we saw in the 1993 prosecutions of the first World Trade Center attacks, but also providing a forum for these terrorists to act as their own attorneys and make a mockery of our justice system.

In response, I joined over 40 of my colleagues in the House of Representatives in co-sponsoring H.R. 4127, introduced by Rep. Louie Gohmert of Texas to amend the Military Commissions Act of 2009. This would make it mandatory that all foreign terrorists stand trial before the previously established Military Commissions rather than a civilian court. We must act immediately to close this loop hole and keep terrorists from our shores. This is not a decision to be made in haste, and we must fully consider the ramifications of holding terror trials just steps away from Ground Zero, Wall Street, and the homes of millions of citizens.

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.