

On Saturday I had the privilege to host the First Congressional District Youth Forum in Yorktown. It's great to hear from the younger generations on current issues, and understand what is on their minds, too. We discussed a range of topics, and also talked about school and education-focused issues they face as students. The students were interested in discussing "healthy food" options at schools, taking out soda machines, among other issues. But their preference, in this time of tight budgets, was that any additional funding be directed to their classrooms and not the cafeteria. In addition to school and extra-curricular activities, many of the students in attendance also worked a part time job or job-shadowed for additional experience.

One of the ideas I'm most excited about from our discussion on Saturday was the idea to create an online forum for continual discussion. Based on a student's idea from the forum, we created a [First District Congressional Youth Forum Facebook page](#). In that space, students can share their ideas and opinions on issues important to them and how Congress can address them. They can also stay tuned in to future Youth Forum meetings and other youth-related events around the First District. The youth in this district, and across the country, are our future leaders, and the work we do today impacts their future. It's our responsibility to ensure we build a foundation of success for our youth. I look forward to more interaction with the students as we continue working in Washington for reform.

Returning to Washington, DC, this week, I had the opportunity to ask [questions of the Army Secretary John McHugh](#) in the House Armed Services Committee hearing on Wednesday regarding the investigation into mismanagement at Arlington Cemetery. As you know, with the presence of so many military installations and veterans in our region, this issue is especially relevant. Arlington is the last resting place of so many of our nation's heroes, servicemen and women who were called upon and gave the ultimate sacrifice to this country, a sacrifice which has furthered the cause of American liberty. The problems with oversight at the Arlington Cemetery are deeply troubling to all of us. Our military service members must have every confidence that we respect - and we honor - their service. Our servicemen and women resting at Arlington, across this country and the world deserve nothing less. America deserves nothing less.

This upcoming week brings the Congressional District work period, which lends additional time to travel around the district and to visit local businesses, to learn more about the needs of our communities, and to talk about the issues facing the nation with many of you. I especially look forward to attending Independence Day observance events, which underline the importance of honoring the founding of this great country. As we gather with our families and friends, enjoy fireworks and barbeque, we cannot forget the independence we enjoy because of the

dedication and sacrifice of those who came before us. This nation and the freedoms it embodied were in the beginning only a dream to our Founding Fathers. With enduring courage and foresight, they dedicated their lives to create this great country and with the help of many men and women in our military they secured our freedoms and liberties. Our servicemen and women continue today in the cause for freedom. On this Independence Day, we thank them.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*