

Last week came to a great close as I visited with the Hampton VA Medical Center on Friday and spoke with the men and women in uniform who have sacrificed for our nation. They are a true inspiration, as we all recognize their service and sacrifice to defend our nation and their efforts past and present in locations across the world to keep us safe. I was pleased to have the opportunity to spend time with them to talk about their experience at the Hampton Center. I want to make sure our heroes are getting the top notch medical care they have earned and deserve, and I will continue to monitor the facility to make sure they are receiving the best service and care.

Earlier in the week, veterans in Fredericksburg had the chance to speak out at my Veterans' Town Hall at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3103 in Fredericksburg. We had a great conversation on a range of important issues, including the recent passage of defense-related legislation -- specifically, the war supplemental funding for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the annual military construction and veterans spending bill, and the National Defense Authorization Act, which sets our nation's defense policy and priorities each year. We also had a good discussion and solid feedback on a number of issues with the Veterans' Administration regarding health care and TRICARE resources for our veterans, retirees and their families. Later in the month, I'll be hosting a second Veterans' Town Hall in Williamsburg. For location information, visit my website, <http://wittman.house.gov>.

Thursday's visits brought me to two of our seafood processors in the First District. The morning visit was to Kellum's Seafood in Weems, and I also visited Amory's Seafood in Hampton. These fact-finding visits brought to light the struggles that these businesses are facing in the aftermath of the Gulf oil spill. A recent study released by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science estimates over \$11 million in losses to the Virginia oyster industry. As a result, I sent a letter to Governor McDonnell encouraging a federal disaster declaration to help the industry recover from these losses.

The Gulf disaster has also turned our attention to our own waters, and how important they are in so many ways. On Wednesday, I penned an editorial in The Daily Press highlighting the need for action on the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. The Bay is a treasure to the Commonwealth, rich in heritage and also a driver of our economy. We've seen successes, with the rebound of the blue crab population and the increasing resiliency of the oyster population. But we must turn attention to the long term health of the Bay. I'm proud to help lead the charge to restore the Bay, and will continue to bring all sides to the table to find common ground. The restoration of the Bay will have lasting positive economic and quality of life effects and it's important to get it right.

As we continue the August work period, I hope we get the chance to speak. Please also share your concerns with me: give a call to my office, take a moment to write on my Facebook page, respond on Twitter, or email through my website.

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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.