

This week I had a chance to sit down with my Seniors' Advisory Councils in the upper and lower parts of the district to give them an update on issues before Congress of interest to them, and discuss their concerns and questions. The First District Seniors' Advisory Councils were created to provide constituents with a discussion forum on issues of interest to the senior community, with topics such as economic security, improving the communities in which seniors live and work, health care and other issues. As I met with these groups on Thursday, much of the discussion focused around the economy, health care and the status of Medicare and Social Security in light of the new health overhaul law.

I am deeply concerned that this bill does nothing to bring down costs and in fact may limit access to health providers. The legislation established a one-time rebate of \$250 starting in 2010 for beneficiaries who reach the coverage gap for their medications, also known to many as the "doughnut hole." The bill cut a combined \$529 billion from Medicare. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the majority of the "savings" under the legislation would be used to pay for other spending and therefore would not enhance the ability of the government to pay for future Medicare benefits. With regard to Social Security, \$53 billion in "savings" is claimed by counting increased Social Security payroll revenues. These dollars are already claimed for future Social Security beneficiaries, and using these funds to offset the cost of this bill assumes we're not going to pay future Social Security benefits.

It's important that as the effects of the new health overhaul legislation unfold that we concentrate on how it will affect seniors' care and benefits. As the implementation of the new health overhaul moves forward over the coming months, I will rely on this group of constituents and the feedback of others to help inform me of ways we can increase access, reduce costs, and increase efficiency in the delivery of services. If you are interested in serving on one of my Advisory Councils, please call my Yorktown office at (757) 874-6687. I always welcome folks who want to get involved.

On Wednesday, I joined with Congressmen Forbes, Nye, Scott, and many state and local leaders to discuss the proposed closing of Joint Forces Command (JFCOM). With such a large potential impact on our region, it was great to see the single, unified bipartisan effort of so many individuals who represent many different interests throughout the Hampton Roads area. It is critical to understand how this decision came about, without evidence of how JFCOM's mission would be carried out or if it was indeed completed. Additionally we must consider both the impact of this decision on Virginia and the greater issue of the affect upon our national security. We must never lose the advantage our military has through all branches working together jointly for this is what makes our military stand out and perform better than any other in the world.

Next week, veterans, their families and all who may be interested are invited to attend my **Veterans' Town Hall**

on Thursday, August 26 at 7 p.m. at VFW Post 4639 in Williamsburg. We will gather to discuss issues of interest to our veterans and their families. We must ensure that veterans receive the benefits and care they have earned serving our nation. I hope you can join us.

As I continue my travels throughout America's First District, I look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas on the best solutions to this nation's challenges. Please feel free to contact me by email on my website, <http://wittman.house.gov> or at 202-225-4261.

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.