

It has been a busy week in America's First District. As September gets underway, and I prepare to return to Washington this week, your input and the feedback I received from you during August will serve me well as I work to represent you in Congress.

On Tuesday, I visited with students at West Point High School where I had a chance to acknowledge them as a School of Excellence and for exceeding the "Adequate Yearly Progress" standards. I enjoyed visiting with students and teachers at the school as they began the second week of the school year and congratulate them on this achievement. We then traveled on to join the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) for a luncheon. As a member of NARFE, I was grateful for the chance to connect with other members. We discussed issues of importance to federal employees and pending federal legislation that would affect their employment or their benefits.

Wednesday morning I was honored to speak to the York-Poquoson Chapter of the American Red Cross. It was great to see folks come together and support the mission of the Red Cross, and to acknowledge their vital work and service to area residents. The Red Cross brings individuals together to help their neighbors in emergencies — whether they live across the street, across town, across the country or across the world. Just last week, we watched Hurricane Earl closely sweep by our coast. Especially in our hurricane-prone area, we understand the importance of being ready for and having critical assistance in time of disaster. We are grateful for the workers and volunteers who dedicate their time and resources to a cause like the Red Cross.

One of the critical issues that will continue as Congress returns to Washington, DC, this week is the proposed closure of Joint Forces Command. I, along with my fellow Virginia colleagues, continue to press for information on this decision. On Thursday, I, along with Reps. Randy Forbes, Bobby Scott, and Glenn Nye sent a letter to President Obama to urge the Administration to perform a thorough analysis of the closure decision before moving forward. This proposal has a large potential impact on our region, and we will continue to demand the analysis and research that justifies this decision to ensure that it is consistent with our national defense needs.

This past weekend, our country solemnly marked the ninth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks. We remember those whose lives were lost, and those who still suffer the loss of their loved ones today around our country and especially here in the First District. . We all remember where we were or what we were doing on that tragic day. This unbelievable event

also brought out the best in many individuals and revealed our heroes, with many citizens, firefighters, and police officers risking their lives to save others. Thousands of members of our nation's Armed Forces have since served, been wounded or given their lives to preserve our country's freedom and national security. In those heroes, we see the true American spirit. On this ninth anniversary, we honor the memory of those lost, thank those who have served, and remember the freedoms we enjoy today because of their sacrifice. May God continue to bless America.

*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.*