

Over the weekend, our nation gasped as the news of the tragedy in Arizona spread. I hope you join me in praying for continued health and healing for those still in the hospital, and peace for those families of the victims. This was a senseless attack on our democracy, and I hope we see swift justice for all involved in this tragedy.

This past week the 112th Congress began with a vote to cut spending in the House of Representatives by reducing our operating budgets by 5%. As I have visited with folks across the district, no issue at the federal level is mentioned more than out-of-control spending. There is much more work to be done in order to rein in spending, but the vote this week sets the tone for better restraint with taxpayer money. Our economy, families, and the future depend upon Congress making the right choices now. And it starts with getting government spending under control, better accountability and more transparency in legislating and decision-making.

With a focus on encouraging economic growth, this week I have already signed on to legislation to incentivize job creation, repeal the health care overhaul law, reform the tax code, and ease the burden on small business.

An important announcement impacting our region came later this week as Secretary Gates outlined the Defense Department's budget proposal for the next fiscal year. In addition to the \$100 billion "efficiencies initiative" the Secretary launched last year which included the closure of Joint Forces Command, his announcement reflects an additional \$78 billion in cuts. I believe efficiencies and savings should and can be found across the federal government. As the Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations I will carefully weigh the proposed cuts and budget requests to ensure that our nation's strategic needs and critical missions are not compromised.

The mood during the week in Washington was about new beginnings. I am so humbled and honored to represent America's First District again in Congress. My service to this district will continue to be rooted in the Constitution. As the oath of office I took on January 5th reads,

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So

help me God.”

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his second full term in November 2010 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.