

It was a busy week in Washington that began with the annual State of the Union Address from the President. I had hoped to hear first and foremost the ways that Washington would trim its waistline to cut the deficit. However, the President's address failed to look beyond the "Washington" state of mind by suggesting more deficit spending to fix our economy. He proposed a partial freeze of the current out-of-control spending levels in the federal government. We cannot continue the spending habits that got us to the point of record deficits and national debt. The projected deficit for 2011 is 1.5 trillion dollars which is unsustainable, having amassed the highest debt level in U.S. history. We cannot afford to add to the huge deficit already burdening our economy. That's why I supported legislation on Tuesday to cut spending levels back to fiscal year 2008 levels. As elected leaders, we need to make tough decisions about cutting spending, not spend more. And during the Address, though many of us disagree on policy, Members came together to honor our colleague, Gabrielle Giffords, and the victims and those wounded in the tragedy in Arizona. We sat among heroes in the gallery of the House of Representatives as the First Lady hosted some of the medical team and folks first at the scene of the tragedy. It was humbling to be joined by these heroes and the families who have suffered because of senseless violence. We were inspired by their strength and resolve to continue through tragedy.

The House Armed Services Committee this week continued its look into Secretary Gates' "Efficiency Initiatives" at the Department of Defense and the effects on our military and the defense of this country. I believe we must be strategic first in the defense of this country, while at the same time being prudent in our use of taxpayer dollars. We will continue to press this issue as we begin the budgeting process for the year.

Wednesday evening, heading home from Washington, I was caught with so many of you in the long commute home from the D.C. metro area during the snowstorm. Many individuals were stuck on the roads for hours, and my commute to Montross lasted about seven hours. With so many federal workers in the First District, I know many of you have similar stories. In this situation, I believe it is important to review the situation and look for alternate solutions to prevent it in the future. While not a silver bullet, I believe that telework can play a role in easing congestion issues and providing workplace flexibility in these types of situations.

I would appreciate your thoughts: please email me through my website or call my office (202-225-4261) with your snowstorm stories and ideas, thoughts and opinions on issues.