

This past week we saw triumph over tragedy and devastation in Gloucester. On Saturday night, communities in Gloucester County experienced a tornado and lost three of its citizens who did not make it through the storm. Our deepest condolences go out to those families and friends whose lives have been forever changed by this exhibit of Mother Nature's fury. On Sunday, I rode along with Gloucester County Sheriff Steve Gentry as he surveyed the damage, and toured other devastated areas with Governor Bob McDonnell on Monday. As we visited these areas following the storm, we found, in the wake of its path, volunteers, strangers helping strangers, and a community coming together. While the circumstances were tragic, it was heartening to see brave first responders, local officials and citizens coming together to help those in need. The Governor declared an official State of Emergency to help speed up the process of receiving state aid, and we will stay in touch with local officials to ensure they have the resources they need to rebuild the community, especially in areas such as Coke that were so devastatingly affected by the impact of the tornado.

Monday was Tax Day, which is a reminder that every dollar funding our government comes from a hard-working taxpayer. I believe we must reform the tax system, but first, we must cut spending. The rate at which Washington, DC, is spending taxpayer dollars is unsustainable. It has been said over and over that Washington, DC, does not have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem. Also on Monday, we heard the news that the long-term outlook of the U.S. economy, as rated by Standard and Poor's, was changed from "stable" to "negative." Standard and Poor's, a credit rating agency, cited the "risk that US policy makers might not reach an agreement on how to address medium- and long-term budgetary challenges by 2013" as the reasoning behind this downgrading. This should be a wake-up call to Congress and the Administration indicating that we must reign in spending to get people back to work, and ultimately, to create more stability in our economy.

Later this week, I visited with citizens groups in Warsaw, Kilmarnock and Newport News to conduct town hall meetings about current Congressional issues. I also had the opportunity to visit the campus of the College of William and Mary, and also received an update from Colonial Williamsburg on the preservation work they are doing to cultivate our Commonwealth's history. I always look forward to hearing from folks directly, and if you are interested in meeting with me or the First District staff, or having us visit your organization please contact my office on the website. We would love to hear from you on the critical issues affecting this nation.

Please visit www.wittman.house.gov to schedule a meeting. And to learn more about preparing for severe weather in Virginia, go to www.vaeemergency.com and

www.ReadyVirginia.gov