

Our great country was founded upon ideals of personal responsibility and individual liberty – freedom we cherish today because of the sacrifice of so many. I believe we must continue to protect these freedoms every day, especially as I work in Congress for you. An energy policy bill passed in 2007 set a restriction on what type of light bulbs manufacturers can produce, and this week I voted to lift that restriction (supporting the BULB Act). Whether or not you use an incandescent light bulb or the newer “CFL” to light your home, I believe that is a choice you can make. Too often, Washington seems to impose policies that give control to folks in Washington, instead of leaving decisions with you. I believe we must prevent government from restricting your choices and personal freedom. Restricting light bulbs is another example of a government reaching too far into the lives of everyday Americans, something I believe is a pattern we must reverse. While this issue may seem isolated and unimportant, especially in light of this country's current fiscal situation, I believe that it is highly indicative of the type of government overreach that has driven our economy into this crisis.

This government overreach is not isolated to the hardware store. Our national debt continues to rise, and yet Congress still isn't operating on a balanced budget. I believe that Congress has got to face reality and acknowledge that we are on an unsustainable path of federal spending. The best way to prevent future spending issues is to make it a constitutional requirement that Congress pass a balanced budget each year. I am a strong supporter of a Balanced Budget Amendment, which will come before the House of Representatives for a vote in the next few weeks. I have heard from a great number of folks in the First District who agree that a Balanced Budget Amendment is necessary. This feedback has been truly helpful to me, and I appreciate all suggestions and opinions I receive from folks about the important issues facing our nation.

And my recent feedback from constituents hasn't just focused on one issue. I have heard from so many of you through my website email, Facebook, Twitter, telephone, fax, and U.S. mail. Just as many folks have contacted me about the Balanced Budget Amendment, I also heard from many of you in the weeks before the vote on the BULB Act, expressing outrage at the idea of the government telling you what kinds of light bulbs you can use in your own home. This input was extremely valuable to me.

Recently, I've heard from Virginians about a variety of different issues, but I've noticed several topics that seem to be especially concerning to folks. One of them is Medicare. I've heard from quite a few folks currently on Medicare who are very concerned that they are going to lose their benefits, and I have reassured them of my support for preserving Medicare for those currently receiving benefits or those who will receive benefits in the near term. My mom relies on Medicare programs; I realize how essential they are to our seniors' health and well-being. H.Con.Res. 34, the budget legislation that passed the House of Representatives in April, preserves Medicare by restructuring the system for those under the age of 55. Under the new system, beneficiaries would experience the same type of program as the one that Members of Congress have. And for those individuals over the age of 55, Medicare coverage will not be changed in any way under this budget proposal. I am truly committed to protecting Medicare by honoring the commitment to current beneficiaries and preserving and strengthening the system for future generations' retirement security.

Another topic on many minds is the issue of raising the debt ceiling. Many of you wonder how the federal government can get away with so much reckless spending when families throughout the First District and America are making hard choices about the necessary expenditures in their household budgets. I agree that we must cut government spending and address our unsustainable deficit. Just as your family makes tough decisions about what purchases are necessary, Congress must also act both decisively and responsibly to address our Nation's growing deficit. As this week ends, we still await some kind of agreement on a proposed resolution to the upcoming debt ceiling vote. I believe that significant spending reductions have got to be a part of this agreement, and we must avoid tax increases, as higher taxes will not get anyone hired. At the same time, as many of you have suggested, we must also keep in mind how any action by Congress would affect financial markets.

Please keep in touch with me as the debate continues. I would love to hear your thoughts on how you think Congress should deal with excessive spending and the federal debt crisis. Email at www.wittman.house.gov or by phone at 202-225-4261.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.