

So many folks have written in this week with continued concern for the critical issue of federal spending, and what Congress should do about the impending deadline to increase the debt ceiling by August 2. Thanks to all of you for your different comments about this crucial issue. It is unacceptable that my grandson, Mark, who just turned one year old (and every child born today), already owes more than \$46,000 to our creditors. There's been much back and forth about how we address the debt limit and ultimately federal spending. We must assure that federal government spending is reduced permanently and that Congress is required to balance its budget. That's why I voted for the Cut, Cap and Balance legislation considered this week. The Cut, Cap, and Balance Act makes spending reductions that would cut the deficit in half next year, and it would save around \$5.8 trillion over ten years. As we look at a \$14.4 trillion national debt, that's a daunting number and we have no option but to begin important reductions and reforms in spending. This legislation also requires that Congress pass a Balanced Budget Amendment before the debt ceiling is raised. The bill was not perfect, but it is a solution that has strict requirements that we cap spending and balance our budget.

And as we look for ways to make government more efficient with its resources, I have good news to report -- we made progress this week on my legislation to help clean-up the Chesapeake Bay. H.R. 258, The Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act, passed through the House Natural Resources Committee, meaning it is ready for a full House vote. I worked over 30 years in and around the Chesapeake Bay, and understand how critical it is that we clean-up and restore this resource for future generations. One of my highest priorities is to achieve restoration of this historic body of water. The Bay is an important economic driver and job-creator for not only Virginians, but the entire watershed around the Chesapeake. We must do more with less; this bill brings accountability to the dollars focused on restoring this treasure. My legislation would put in place restoration efforts that were used successfully in the Everglades and the Great Lakes. In addition, the bill has received endorsements from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Virginia Seafood Council. Also, you may be interested to know that in May, I co-founded the Congressional Chesapeake Bay Watershed Caucus, which brings together members from the Chesapeake Bay watershed region to discuss issues related to the Bay and Bay clean-up.

Also, this week the appropriations bill for the Legislative Branch - Members of Congress'

operations - was up for a vote. The bill, in my mind, did not go far enough in reducing spending, therefore, I voted against it. In this economic climate and in the midst of discussions on raising the debt limit above \$14 trillion, I believe Congress has a duty to set the tone for fiscal responsibility. We should be cutting Members' salaries first, and then making substantive cuts to all Congressional operations. Congressmen and women should lead by example and show the American people that they, too, are willing to sacrifice in order to get our fiscal house back in order. That is why I support legislation to cut the pay of Members of Congress and to eliminate their automatic pay raise, which I also supported during the 111th Congress during 2009-2010.

As our nation's leaders continue to discuss and negotiate our nation's fiscal future, I hope you will continue to let me know what you believe about what Congress should be doing. We are facing critical decisions as a Nation, and your input is important now more than ever. As always, you can call my office at (202) 225-4261 or email me through my website at [www.wittman.house.gov](http://www.wittman.house.gov)

*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.*