

In recent years, the public has given increased attention to the frustrating lack of accountability in Washington. Massive spending bills, budget proposals keeping this country in the red, and partisan bickering have all contributed to folks' unhappiness with Congress. Washington must change the way it does business and restore the public's trust in our democratic system. Last week, I was proud to support several pieces of legislation that would help restore accountability and transparency to Congress.

On Tuesday, the House passed a bill (H.R. 3581) to provide a more accurate accounting of the true cost of federal credit programs. This would allow both Congress and the citizens of the United States to have a better idea of the real deficit, thereby leading to more transparency in the budget process as well as the opportunity for a more effective deficit reduction strategy. On Wednesday, a bill authored by Rep. Paul Ryan (H.R. 3521) passed the House by a vote of 254-173. This legislation would allow the President to take certain provisions with which he disagrees from an appropriations bill and submit them to Congress for an up or down vote on their removal from the overall bill. This would provide Congress with another tool for cutting wasteful spending, while at the same time keeping the power of the purse in Congress' hands, not the President's. And while I am certainly in favor of the current ban on earmarks in the House of Representatives, I believe that this provision would help prevent future earmarks or other examples of wasteful spending from being a part of the yearly federal spending bills.

Many folks in Virginia's First District have also been demanding action recently to ensure that Members of Congress are treated the same way as everyone else when it comes to laws governing financial decisions, such as buying and selling stocks. On Thursday, I supported the Stop Trading On Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act, which passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 417-2. The STOCK Act would confirm within our existing laws to clarify that it is illegal for Members of Congress to use non-public information for their own personal profit. This bill would also establish new financial disclosure requirements for executive and legislative branch employees, including Members of Congress. An efficient online database would make this information accessible to the public. Members of Congress must be held to the highest standards of integrity and personal conduct, and I believe that the STOCK Act will prevent violations of insider-trading laws by government officials.

Accountability and transparency have been largely absent from political conversations, and I am committed to restoring common-sense principles to the actions of Congress. Each of these bills helps to further that goal, and I look forward to supporting other measures to bring fiscal discipline and straightforward sincerity to Washington. Please keep in touch with me as we work together to pursue rational solutions. I can be reached by telephone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), via Facebook (www.facebook.com/reprobwittman), or on Twitter (www.twitter.com/robwittman).

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.

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