

As I continue my work in the House of Representatives this week, my heart goes out to all of those affected by the horrible, senseless tragedy on Friday in Newtown, Connecticut. Let's keep the victims and their loved ones in our thoughts and prayers.

Recently, we recognized the 71st anniversary of the tragic attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The events of that day resulted in the deaths of thousands of Americans and the beginning of U.S. involvement in World War II. My own father was a World War II veteran, and I know personally the bravery and honorable values of that generation. As we remember those who perished at Pearl Harbor and those who fought back bravely to fend off the attack and protect their fellow citizens, let's also keep in mind the men and women of our all-volunteer force currently defending our freedom, as well as their families. Each day, I am grateful for those who serve and have served this country - from our nation's inception through the present day.

Many of those who serve our nation received their early training and education at one of our nation's service academies, and I was honored last week to be elected to a third term as chairman of the United States Naval Academy Board of Visitors. As Chairman, I am committed to ensuring that the quality of the education and training that our midshipmen receive continues to be of the highest caliber. The First District itself has 40 current midshipmen attending the Naval Academy, and I am proud to be able to represent them and the many other alumni in the First District and across Virginia and the nation.

As I think about those who've served our nation in the past and those who serve her today, I remember just how important it is that Congress provide the resources, training, and equipment necessary for them to complete their mission. Through my role as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, as well as in my interactions with the many retired and active duty Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen in the First District, I've found that their expertise and commitment to the cause of freedom is second to none. And yet the approaching cuts to our national defense, known as sequestration, continue to loom. The House has passed legislation to avoid sequestration by finding efficiencies elsewhere in the budget; it is absolutely critical that this plan or a similar one be put in place in order to prevent sequestration from occurring. Governing is a serious task, and it is past time to talk about real solutions to the problems we face. Our men and women in uniform and this nation cannot risk failure. Our national security depends on us getting this right.

Please continue to weigh in as the debate continues over how to avoid the "Fiscal Cliff." I

appreciate hearing your thoughts and ideas. 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).