

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-01) released the following statement in reaction to today's briefing by Defense Secretary Robert Gates on the department's fiscal year 2012 budget request. Secretary Gates outlined the department's \$553 billion fiscal year 2012 budget proposal and revealed steps that the department will take to reduce spending by \$150 billion over the next five years. In addition to the \$100 billion efficiencies initiative the Secretary launched last year, today's announcement reflects an additional \$78 billion in cuts from the Five Year Defense Plan submitted in 2010.

“There is no question that efficiencies and savings should and can be found across the federal government and that tough decisions have to be made,” Wittman said. “It is critical that any savings achieved through the efficiencies initiative be reinvested in force structure and modernization and not returned to the General Treasury to be used to fund non-Defense programs. As the Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I will carefully weigh the proposed cuts and budget request to ensure that our nation's strategic needs and critical missions are not compromised. I will demand that Secretary Gates work cooperatively and transparently with Congress as budget decisions of such magnitude are made.”

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his second full term in November 2010 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee.*