

June 27, 2008: Weekly Washington Update

It's been quite a busy week in Washington. With all that's been going on, I wanted to use this week's update to talk about the work we've been doing in the House Armed Services and Natural Resources Committees.

In the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), we considered several important issues this week. In one hearing, we discussed the current state of China's forces. This included their military build-up, possible worldwide intentions, recent economic and security developments, and shipbuilding production. China's growing military power is a key concern for Congress and this briefing was helpful in keeping our finger on the pulse of their activities.

The full House Armed Services Committee also received a top secret briefing on Iran. As many of you know, Iran is continuing to pursue nuclear development in the face of global opposition and is also engaged in activities to destabilize the Middle East. While the specifics of the briefing were Top Secret, I can report that we discussed the state of Iran's air defense network, the extent of Iran's hardening of nuclear-related and other facilities, and likely responses by Iran or Iranian proxies to possible actions against Iran.

It was also a busy week on the Natural Resources Committee. In the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, we held a hearing discussing the potential effects of a changing climate and its impacts on wildlife and oceans. The Chesapeake Bay is one of my top priorities in Congress and this hearing provided excellent insight into the challenges that lay ahead to ensure a healthy Bay.

In the Full Committee, we debated and amended several bills, including one designating the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route as National Historic Trail. I am fortunate to represent "America's First Congressional District" which includes Yorktown, the site of the surrender of British forces to General George Washington. This trail designation traces Washington's route between Yorktown, Virginia and Newport, Rhode Island.

We also debated and amended the Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection Act, which is aimed to benefit both the economies and the environments of coastal communities with conservation grants. This legislation is another mechanism by which we can focus on improving restoration efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As you may know, Members of Congress are back in their districts this week to work in recognition of Independence Day. I'll be visiting constituents throughout the district each day and would love to hear any concerns you might have. If you can't make it to meet with me in person, I hope you'll visit my website, <http://www.wittman.house.gov/>, or call my office at (202) 225-4261. I'm also honored to be taking part in several Independence Day celebrations throughout the First District. Happy Fourth of July!