

October 27, 2008: Weekly Washington Update

As the economic crisis unfolds, there have been a series of proposals and initiatives set forth by both the Administration and Congress to address the situation. The President recently announced that he will hold a series of global economic forums in order to better coordinate the worldwide response. The Federal Reserve is continuing to do the legwork on executing the original economic recovery act and looking at a multitude of options for providing credit. In Congress, there is much talk of a second economic stimulus plan.

In recent days, there are some signs that the credit freeze is beginning to thaw. However, much more work remains to be done. Without a doubt, lessening the impact of this crisis ought to be Congress' number one priority. I would like to share the criteria I will use for considering economic recovery legislation as it develops.

For any legislation, I will be especially mindful of the long term impact it will have on our national debt. Congress must act responsibly; we cannot continue to spend at the current pace and expect a healthy country for our children and grandchildren. In addition to free market solutions, there may be the need for well focused and reasoned government programs. However, I will not be supportive of any legislation that raises the nation's debt ceiling and relies on borrowing to address these problems.

Any proposed legislation must also have a direct positive impact on the bottom line for our families and small businesses. To date, many of the efforts have been directed at large US and international financial institutions. As we've seen, what happens in the international financial markets can have a direct impact on our retirements and home values, not to mention employment levels and credit for small business. However, Congress must ensure that we are focusing our efforts in areas that will directly assist local economies across the nation and the tens of millions of jobs provided by small business.

Finally, we absolutely must ensure that subsequent legislation holds individuals accountable instead of simply bailing out bad decisions. We must couple any financial investment with modernized regulation and increased market transparency. Furthermore, Congress must examine its own role in contributing to the current economic crisis. In short, we must provide a full accounting of what caused this crisis and take steps to ensure that it does not happen again.

There is no doubt that Congress and the next President will have serious legislation to consider in short order. I have spoken directly with hundreds of constituents about the recovery plan and thousands more have called and written my office. In the coming months, your input is welcome and encouraged. You can reach my office at (202) 225-4261 or via our website at <http://wittman.house.gov/>.