

December 10, 2008: Congressman Wittman Votes Against Auto Industry Bailout

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Rob Wittman this evening voted against H.R. 7321, The Auto Industry Financing and Restructuring Act. This legislation passed the House by a vote of 237 to 170. Wittman issued the following statement:

"The manufacturing and industrial base is the foundation of the American economy. Congress owes it to the hard working people in these companies, and the American people as a whole, to develop a plan that will enable the auto industry to return to long term profitability. Today's legislation lacked the comprehensive nature necessary to require all parties involved to work together to turn these companies around."

"I had two key criteria for considering this legislation. First, the bill needed to provide a realistic requirement that assures the successful reorganization and long term viability of these companies. Equally as important, the taxpayer investment must be adequately protected by assuring the repayment of these loans even if the auto companies fail. This bill did not meet either benchmark."

"There is no doubt that Congress should play a role in assisting the auto industry. I support a program that would provide FDIC-like insurance to encourage investors to proffer the financing that these companies need, rather than using taxpayer dollars. I also support legislation that would directly incentivize the sale of new cars, including a bill to provide a \$10,000 tax deduction for the purchase of new autos produced in the United States and one to allow taxpayers to deduct from their federal taxes their state and local sales taxes, including those paid with the purchase of a new car or truck."

"I am very concerned about the lack of consistency in the government response to the recent financial crisis. We are adopting a 'spend now and ask questions later' approach that is dangerous for businesses and risky for the taxpayers. While Congress and the federal government must certainly play a role in helping stem the effects of this recession, we must tread carefully and purposefully in our involvement in the private sector."

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was re-elected to his first full term in November of 2008.