

January 23, 2009: Weekly Washington Update

This week I had the distinct honor of attending the Inauguration of our Nation's 44th President, Barack Obama. This memorable occasion celebrated the unique history of the peaceful transition of power in America and set the stage for many more important milestones. I wish President Obama all the best as he begins this journey. He enters the White House at a time of tremendous challenges --economic turmoil we haven't seen in over 80 years, we are fighting two wars, and energy prices continue to fluctuate. These issues are too big for one party to solve. It is my sincere hope that President Obama will rise to the occasion and work with both sides of the aisle in Congress to solve the problems we now face.

Today, job loss, unavailability of credit, and home foreclosures are affecting the lives of Americans across our country. We need to come together to get our economy moving again, and this includes keeping taxes low and investing in America's businesses. So far, the President's proposed economic stimulus package, which is expected to come before the House of Representatives for a vote in the coming week, calls for over \$550 billion in federal spending with provisions for \$275 billion in tax cuts. I am continuing to read through the proposed bill and receive feedback from my constituents, but I can certainly tell you that I have serious concerns about the spending provisions in the bill. We must work to find solutions which will not place the country into further unprecedented levels of debt. If you have not already, I hope you will contact my office to let me know your views on this stimulus package.

It will also be critical for the new Administration to protect the homeland. The drawdown of forces in Iraq should be completed in accordance with the expertise of our military leaders and not done in haste. In my two visits to Iraq, I have seen the tremendous work our service men and women have done; they are truly the finest in the world. Keeping the American people safe from those who wish us harm is the President's chief responsibility, and we must work together to ensure that America remains secure while honoring our commitments to our allies around the world.

Lastly, America must continue on the road to energy independence by investing in alternative energy solutions while both emphasizing good stewardship of our environment and utilizing our current resources responsibly. I support increased domestic energy production and conservation as we work to develop alternative and renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, and other resources. We have a unique opportunity to harness American innovation, create jobs, and take control of our energy demand so that our country is not beholden to other nations for our energy supply.

We have many challenges ahead and I look forward to working with President Obama and my fellow Members of Congress to find bipartisan solutions to the issues affecting our country. In the 200 years since the founding of our Republic, our country's leaders have sought to come together and rise above the rhetoric to ensure better days ahead for our citizens. As long as the constituents of Virginia's First District continue to send me back to Washington, you have my commitment that I will be such a voice.

If we can be of assistance or if you have questions or comments please feel free to contact us at 202-225-4261 or at <http://wittman.house.gov/>.