

January 27, 2009: Congress Wittman Meets with President Obama to Discuss Stimulus Package

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Today Congressman Rob Wittman along with fellow House Republicans met with President Barack Obama at a special GOP Conference meeting to discuss his proposed stimulus package: H.R 1 - The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Conference Members were given the opportunity to discuss the package, its overall cost and ask the President questions.

"I appreciate the President taking the time to come meet with me and other House Republicans; I believe that these types of discussions are always productive in our efforts to address the challenges of our country. We had a very frank discussion about the proposed stimulus package, which will cost taxpayers \$825 billion, but I'm still left with many concerns about what passes as stimulus," said Wittman.

"President Obama stated in our meeting in reference to our rate of deficit spending that 'the pace we are going will do irreparable harm to the economy.' I agree with this assessment and would add that we cannot sustain the current level of deficit spending with over a 1.2 trillion dollar deficit this year and a projected deficit of 3.8 trillion dollars in 2010," said Wittman.

"I strongly support the tax cuts in the package, but they are a very small portion of the stimulus bill. In fact, for every \$1 the bill offers in tax cuts for small businesses; there is \$4 to plant grass on the National Mall. Economists agree that tax cuts aid both small businesses and the taxpayer and that is where real stimulus will come from," said Wittman.

Wittman is still reviewing the stimulus legislation and is holding two telephone town-hall calls tonight to get input from his constituents. He has already heard from many who have concerns that the package includes only \$74 billion, or 8.9% of the bill, for transportation infrastructure and highway construction projects. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office predicts that only 7% of the funds in this bill will be spent in the current fiscal year and less than half will be spent by the end of 2010. Additionally, the end goal of creating and protecting American jobs will result in a cost of \$225,000 of taxpayer's dollar for each job created or saved compared to a cost of only \$50,000 per job created in the private sector.