

Just before I left D.C. to spend August in the First Congressional District I had lunch with a small business owner who is also a constituent. He echoed many of the same thoughts I have heard through my travels from Fredericksburg to Yorktown: "Where are the jobs?"

The folks I've spoken to are anxious, concerned, and frustrated with what's going on in Washington, and I'm with them. Massive amounts of spending over the past few months have done a great deal for the growth of debt, but small businesses and citizens are not seeing jobs. What many in Washington these days don't realize is that it is small business owners and entrepreneurs that are going to put Americans back to work. I am committed to working across the aisle to find commonsense solutions to create opportunities to put citizens back to work. I have co-sponsored two bills which would grow jobs and address our increasing debt burden.

The first of these two bills is the Economic Recovery and Middle-Class Tax Relief Act of 2009, which would amend the tax code to reduce individual and corporate income tax rates, repeal the alternative minimum tax for individual taxpayers and do away with limits on tax deductions allowed on the assets of small businesses. It would also increase the tax deductions for tuition and related expenses on qualified education loans to reduce the debt obligations of those young folks just out of school who are looking for jobs.

The second bill is the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act which would create a bipartisan commission to develop legislation designed to restore balance to our federal government spending and debt. The commission would provide legislation to the Congress to fix the unsustainable budget deficit, create opportunities to increase net national savings to provide for domestic investment and economic growth, examine the implications of foreign ownership of our National debt, and make revisions to the budget process to place greater emphasis on long-term fiscal health.

I whole heartedly believe that the same entrepreneurial spirit and ingenuity of Americans that has pulled us through countless trials and tribulations is what will see us through once more. By no means are these two pieces of legislation a silver bullet to fix our problems, but they are the kick start we desperately need to ensure future prosperity and job growth.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee, where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*