

This week I met with numerous small business owners in the construction, agribusiness and seafood industries. Small businesses across the nation are facing challenges - whether it's accessing credit, making payroll, or paying taxes. In order to achieve healthy economic recovery, we must support our job creators. Our nation's small businesses create over 70% of the new jobs in the country each year. I can't tell you how many times small business owners tell me the best thing the government can do is to simply get out of the way.

Instead of increased deficit spending, Congress needs to enact pro-growth policies that encourage innovation and success, not penalize it. We can incentivize business with tax relief and incentives so they are better able to manage risks to foster their business and create new jobs. One of my advisory groups, the First Congressional District Small Business Advisory Council, allows me to hear directly from a range of small business owners, regional chambers of commerce, and business development authorities.

Lowering the tax burden on small firms and simplifying the tax code would encourage small business investment, expansion and job creation. I've been advocating for tax cuts for small businesses. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 4100, the Jumpstarting Our Business Sector (JOBS Act). This legislation would provide much needed tax relief to small businesses and return the unspent taxpayer money from the \$789.5 billion dollar "stimulus" bill. In addition, Congress must extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, and must not levy new taxes or tax rate hikes upon small businesses.

Many small businesses continue to experience problems with obtaining credit or loans to operate. Congress needs to do more to relieve the stress on credit markets for small businesses to obtain the capital they need to pay salaries and keep their businesses running. I supported and the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3854, the Small Business Financing and Investment Act of 2009, which increases loan limits for the Small Business Administration's business loan guarantee programs and contains measures designed to increase small business's access to capital.

To help reduce costs for businesses, I also am a cosponsor of H.R. 2607, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2009 which would allow for small businesses and other professional and trade associations to band together to purchase group health plans. I have also cosponsored legislation (H.R. 3952) which would increase the amount businesses can deduct on their taxes and legislation (H.R. 1552) which would increase the new business start-up tax deduction. These measures could assist businesses by lowering the operating costs for their businesses,

and free up much-needed funds for innovative new ideas, business development or addition of new employees.

Government does not have all of the answers. The entrepreneurial spirit and the practice of our individual freedoms is what makes our nation great. American innovators and entrepreneurs will be crucial to the recovery of our economy. I will continue to support these types of policies, to foster the American entrepreneurial spirit guiding our country's economy toward recovery.

*Congressman Rob Wittman recently received the "Spirit of Enterprise" Award from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, for his support of pro-growth, job friendly policies. He represents the First District of Virginia, and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*