

Last week brought a stunning announcement from Defense Secretary Robert Gates that he intends to close Joint Forces Command in Norfolk. This Command ensures that all of our forces work together in the most efficient way possible to combat the threats our nation faces. This announcement came as a shock to the Commonwealth. I joined with Governor McDonnell and Congressmen Forbes, Scott, and Nye on Monday to share the frustrations and concerns about the quick decision, and the strategic implications for our nation. This decision, should it go through, will have a significant impact on our nation and Virginia, and I will do everything I possibly can to stop it.

Until we see significant evidence that it is the right decision for the future of our military and our national security, I cannot support this announcement by Secretary Gates. Earlier this summer, the House Armed Services Committee spent considerable time reviewing the nation's defense policy and the status of Joint Forces Command was never called into question. On Wednesday, I authored an editorial voicing my concerns in USA Today. You can read my editorial here: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2010-08-11-editorial11\\_ST1\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2010-08-11-editorial11_ST1_N.htm)

Also last week, I sent a letter, along with Senators Webb and Warner, and Congressmen Forbes, Scott, and Nye to Secretary Gates calling into question the strategic and legal basis for his recommendation to eliminate the U.S. Joint Forces Command. On August 18, I joined with Congressman Randy Forbes, other members of the Congressional delegation, and numerous stakeholders affected by this announcement in a roundtable discussion. The meeting provided an opportunity for Members of Congress and local leaders to analyze ideas and prepare a collective response to the announcement.

On Tuesday last week, the House of Representatives unexpectedly returned to Washington, DC, to pass yet another measure that adds to our deficit. During this "emergency session," Congress unfortunately supported another example of throwing money at a problem instead of allowing states more flexibility to address their needs and fix their budgets for the long term. Congress must implement real reforms that reduce spending to inject life into our economy. By passing another spending bill, Congress simply continues to ignore the larger problems facing families, businesses and communities. Congress should instead look to provide real relief to our economy by reducing spending and enacting permanent tax relief to help struggling families and small businesses. By allowing hardworking individuals keep more of their hard-earned dollars and businesses to keep capital to help them grow and create jobs, Congress could inject more life into our economy and revive job growth. With the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts set to expire at the end of this year, taxes are an important issue that we must address before Congress wraps up its 2010 session. I will continue to support policies that will ensure both responsible use of

taxpayer dollars and critical tax relief for families and businesses.

I look forward to continuing my travels throughout America's First District and hearing your thoughts and ideas on the best solutions to this nation's challenges. Please feel free to contact me by email on my website, <http://wittman.house.gov> or at 202-225-4261.

*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*