

This week began with a great event to focus on one of the most important founding documents of our country: the Constitution. William and Mary law school kicked off its “Constitutional Conversations” event on Monday evening, and I was pleased to join students to help introduce this great educational series. These types of discussions are so relevant to the conversations going on around the country today, with the focus on the role of government in our lives. As citizens, we’re afforded opportunities and rights to influence the making of public policy by the government. And, it’s more important than ever that citizens engage in this discussion to allow their voices to be heard. I was pleased to be a part of this kick-off, and applaud the student leaders for heading up such an important series of discussions to educate citizens about their civic rights and duties.

Much of this week in Washington, DC, focused on the Defense Department’s “Efficiency Initiative,” which includes the proposed closure of Joint Forces Command. On Tuesday morning, I joined with members of the Virginia Congressional delegation, and with Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, to meet with officials at the Pentagon to discuss our concerns relating to how these decisions on the cuts were made. I left the meeting at the Pentagon bitterly disappointed. Instead of meeting our expectations to gain a clearer understanding of the announcement to close Joint Forces Command and to cut the contractor workforce, Deputy Defense Secretary William Lynn III and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General James Cartwright, failed to provide any substantive evidence that a thoughtful analysis of this decision took place. Unchecked, negligent, and hasty decision-making within the Defense Department of this country is simply unacceptable, and undermines the confidence in the decisions made by the leaders of this country on behalf of our military and our citizens. I support the goal of making our federal agencies more efficient, but we must do so in thoughtful ways and in the best interests of this nation.

The House Armed Services Committee held a hearing on Wednesday to receive testimony and further question officials from the Defense Department about these cuts and the Joint Forces Command closure ([visit my website to watch a video of the questioning](#)). The lack of transparency continued as defense officials persisted in their efforts to stonewall on any further information or analysis. On Thursday, I served as the Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee at a hearing on this efficiency initiative where I questioned a panel of independent witnesses, including the former Deputy Commander of JFCOM, on the validity of the decision-making process. I will continue to press the Pentagon for answers. It is essential that a thorough review takes place in these decisions, not only for Virginians directly affected, but for all Americans. The transparency and lack of accountability in the current discussion is unacceptable. Decision-makers and leaders in this country must be held to a higher standard, especially when the security of this country is at the heart of the issue.

Join me this week: I will host a constituent conference call on the proposed closure of Joint Forces Command and the Defense Department's Efficiency Initiative on Wednesday to discuss the happenings from this week, as well as to hear from you about this critical issue. Please join:

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ **Wednesday, October 6, 2010, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. Call-in: 877-229-8493, Pass code: 13327**

Congress adjourned this week until November 15th without holding a vote on the looming tax increase coming on January 1, 2011. In order to prevent tax increases, Congress must vote to prevent the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts from expiring. Unfortunately Congress adjourned instead, leaving our economy with continued uncertainty. As it was said earlier this week, higher taxes won't get anybody hired. I will continue to support and advocate for lower taxes for all individuals and small businesses as we continue to work toward economic recovery.

I appreciate the comments, phone calls, emails, and Facebook comments as you all stay engaged on the issues. Please continue share your thoughts with me via email on my website, <http://wittman.house.gov>, on social media, or call my office 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.