

This past week began with a great visit to one of the government classes at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. It was a very thoughtful and direct dialogue about the current state of government and where we should go from here. We continued our day on campus and stopped by to speak with some of the law school students, and had the opportunity to tour the veterans' benefits clinic, to learn more about all the clinic does to help veterans.

I also had the opportunity to visit with some younger students and their teachers at Hornsby Middle School and J.B. Blayton Elementary School in Williamsburg, Thomas Hunter Middle School and Lee-Jackson Elementary School in Mathews, Mathews High School, Holy Cross Academy and Cedar Forest Elementary School in Fredericksburg. It was great to spend time at our great area schools and get a current picture from educators, as well as to hear from students themselves and share with them about their government.

This past week also brought humbling moments, as I attended numerous events across America's First District honoring our nation's veterans. These events were a great reminder of the service and sacrifice of so many that protect our country and its citizens, and that advance the ideals that we hold close to our hearts. Veterans Day is an important day of remembrance and though our nation is faced with so many challenges we must never forget that our freedom is precious and that all gave some and some gave all to preserve it. Since the beginnings of our great nation, many have fought and died for our liberty. Our country remains free and powerful because we have the strongest military the world has ever known; and behind every soldier and veteran is a family who supports them wholeheartedly. Across Virginia, our commonwealth is steeped in military tradition and today we're proud of the thousands from Virginia who have served or are currently serving today. From a wreath-laying at Fort A.P. Hill, a Marine Corps Birthday celebration in Stafford to the Fredericksburg Area Veterans Council, I was proud and humbled to be a part of these events honoring the brave men and women who have served now and in the past.

This week, Congress returns to Washington, DC, for the beginning of a "lame-duck" session. I believe that our top priority must be to pass legislation to allow our economy to get moving again – we must extend the tax cuts across all incomes. Higher taxes will not get anyone hired. By allowing Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money, the federal government puts the power back into the hands of the people, allowing them to decide how their money is best spent. It's time that Washington and the federal government take the actions necessary to eliminate some of this uncertainty in our economy and get a handle on the out-of-control federal spending with an eye toward common sense, and the best interest and safety of this nation in mind.

As always, please continue to share your thoughts with me by phone (202-225-4261) or by email online ( <http://wittman.house.gov> ).

*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.*