

This week, we watched history in the making, as the space shuttle Atlantis lifted off for the last time, ending a 30-year era of space flight. Here in America's First District, our rich history, dating back to the founding of our nation, shares a piece of space shuttle history. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Langley Research Center opened its doors in the First District in 1917, the nation's first civilian aeronautical research facility and NASA's original field center and home of the first astronauts. NASA and the space shuttle program provided memorable moments in our nation's history and created opportunities and dreams for so many children growing up in the 20th century. With this final launch of the space shuttle, attention has turned to NASA and its future. Right here in Virginia, NASA Langley is and will continue to be a leader in aeronautics, science, and space exploration initiatives.

Back in Washington, DC, this week the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2219, legislation that provides a framework for the Department of Defense (DoD) spending for the fiscal year 2012. H.R. 2219 sets the spending level at \$8.9 billion below the President's 2012 budget request, and sets the overall spending level 3 percent below last year. I supported this bill which will meet the military's needs while also cutting government spending. This is especially important as we work to rein in out-of-control spending, and waste, fraud and abuse in government. I believe everything must be on the table, and we must make tough decisions between what is nice and what is necessary. At the same time, we must keep a careful eye at the resources provided to our nation's service members as they defend this nation around the globe. Virginia has a proud military history, and in America's First District, many are familiar with the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform; folks who are our family, friends and neighbors. Even as we require the government to be more efficient with taxpayer dollars, we must also ensure our servicemembers have the resources they need to carry out their important mission.

Please continue to share your thoughts on these issues and more, by email at [www.wittman.house.gov](http://www.wittman.house.gov) or by phone at 202-225-4261.

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