

As is normal in early April, the days are getting warmer and leaves are growing back on the trees of the First District. Of course, April also brings something else that isn't quite as refreshing: Tax Day. And if you're anything like me, Tax Day causes many mixed emotions. On the one hand, I'm proud that I can do my part to support the needs of this great country: to help pay the salaries of those dedicated servicemen and women who defend our country each day, to support our national crime fighting and prevention and law enforcement agencies, and to maintain our national parks, among other efforts. However, I'm also a bit frustrated as I watch the lack of fiscal discipline in Washington as hardworking Americans' tax dollars are spent. Folks are struggling to pay their bills and take care of their families, and having to send their hard-earned dollars to Washington and learn that there continues to be wasteful and inefficient government programs just makes things worse.

Often when I talk to folks in Virginia's First District about the U.S. tax code, their comments center around how complicated it is. The multitude of tax brackets, subsidies, breaks, and deductions makes filing taxes a nightmare, and costs individuals and businesses precious time that they could be devoting to more productive pursuits. Fundamental tax reform can clear up this confusion. That's why I support legislation to simplify our tax code and make it more fair. It is important for Congress to consider a meaningful rewrite of the U.S. tax code. By making our tax code simpler and more fair, we can get our economy growing again and enable individuals and businesses to focus on growth and innovation rather than wasting valuable time and resources trying to figure out bureaucratic language and exactly how much money they have to send to Washington.

On March 29, I supported a budget proposal for 2013, H.Con.Res. 112, which included basic and comprehensive tax reform. It proposes two tax brackets instead of six, while also eliminating the Alternative Minimum Tax that currently threatens 31 million middle-class families with higher taxes. At the same time, H.Con.Res. 112 proposes a 10 percent reduction in America's corporate tax rate. The United States currently has the highest corporate tax rate among developed countries, which is, unfortunately, an incentive for companies to keep their overseas earnings overseas. Many economists argue that reducing the tax rate would encourage companies to invest here in the United States rather than abroad, creating jobs and growing our economy. Reducing the corporate tax rate is an idea with bipartisan support and one that would have far reaching benefits for Americans. It is critical that Congress pass commonsense reforms like these so the economy can recover and Americans can hold onto more of their hard earned dollars.

I've also cosponsored various other pieces of tax reform legislation during this session of Congress, including:

- H.R. 462, the Tax Code Termination Act, which would abolish the Internal Revenue Code, our current tax system, and call on Congress to approve a new federal tax system

- H.R. 177, the Death Tax Repeal Act, which would permanently repeal the estate tax, also known as the “death tax.”

- H.R. 547, the Individual AMT Repeal Act, which would repeal the Alternative Minimum Tax on individuals.

- H.R. 25, the Fair Tax Act, which would repeal the income tax and employment tax, as well as the estate and gift tax, and replace them with a sales tax on goods and services purchased in the United States. The rate of this sales tax would be consistent across the country for every citizen.

As Tax Day approaches, please share your stories about filing taxes or your ideas about how to fix the U.S. tax code. I believe we can all work together to craft simpler, more fair and clearer tax policies that will improve our economy and get Virginians back to work. As always, I can be reached via telephone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), via Facebook (www.facebook.com/RepRobWittman), and on Twitter (www.twitter.com/RobWittman).