

Montross, Va. – The greatest benefit from being able to spend more time in America’s First District is having the opportunity to gauge the thoughts and ideas of those I represent. The letters, emails, phone calls, and faxes I receive in my offices provide an excellent measure of your thoughts, but it is even better to have first hand conversations with folks back home in Montross and all around Virginia. Without a doubt, we are all largely frustrated with the current situation in Washington and in our nation as a whole. A [recent poll](#) cited that 75% of Americans are dissatisfied with “the way things are going in the United States.” This poll certainly reflects the discussions that I have had with folks in the district. It’s also important to acknowledge that many individuals in this poll stated “dissatisfaction with government” as one of their primary concerns. I, too, am frustrated with the all-too-familiar political quarrels instead of rational discussions about the issues facing our nation.

The same poll mentioned above also questioned folks on the important issues facing our country. Overwhelmingly, the general consensus shows that people believe economic issues are our top problem, with the general economy and a dismal jobs situation ranking one and two, respectively. As I meet with folks in Virginia’s First District, I often find that they feel the same way. This is why it’s critical that we pass legislation that can fuel an environment of job creation, an atmosphere in which small businesses can focus on growth and innovation instead of poring through pages of bureaucratic regulations. Fundamental tax reform is critical too, so that individuals and families can enjoy a simpler, fairer tax code that promotes overall growth in our economy and keeps American jobs here on our shores. These types of policies are critical for economic recovery. But the economy is not a simple matter, and many other important topics factor in as well, including health care and energy costs.

Folks polled cited health care as the third most important factor facing our country, and I believe it is critical for Washington to responsibly address this issue. Health care represents an important section of our economy, and the costs of medical care are a major expense for many families. Rational, patient-centered health care reform is absolutely necessary for bringing down these costs, including permitting the sale of insurance across state lines, ensuring coverage for those with preexisting conditions, and allowing young people up to age 26 to stay on their parents’ insurance plans, as well as other practical ideas. And any health care reform proposal must ensure that health care decisions remain between a patient and his or her doctor. Government bureaucrats or insurance companies should not be making these personal decisions.

The rising cost of energy is another factor that must be addressed as part of our economic recovery. Gas prices are still outrageously high, and these heightened prices impact families and businesses just as any other expense does. This is why I support all-of-the-above energy

policy that includes environmentally-responsible natural gas and oil exploration, renewable energy and efficient technologies, and encouragement for developing innovative, next generation technologies to increase affordability and accessibility.

These are just a few of the important issues facing our country, and I know that each of you have great ideas for how we can return our country to a state where 100% of the citizens are enthusiastically positive about “the way things are going in the United States.” It is important that this discussion include voices from all corners of our population, and I hope that you reach out to me so that we can work together to pursue commonsense solutions. I can be reached by phone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), via Facebook (www.facebook.com/reprobwittman), and on Twitter (www.twitter.com/robwittman).

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.