

First, my thoughts and prayers are with all of you who have been affected by the winds and waters of Hurricane Sandy during the last few days. It is during times like these when we especially feel the value of community and the importance of friends and loved ones. Our emergency responders are very capable, providing services that are truly invaluable to our communities. In the coming days, it'll be important for local, state, and federal efforts to work together smoothly so that folks can get back to their lives and move on from this horrific storm. If I can be of any assistance to you or your family, please don't hesitate to ask.

Earlier in the week, I was pleased to take part in a timely event hosted by the Quantico/Belvoir Regional Business Alliance in Stafford. This forum focused on the looming defense cuts, known as sequestration, that are set to take effect in January. This was a good opportunity to discuss this enormous problem facing our Commonwealth, which could face nearly 200,000 job losses as a result. I am very concerned about the devastating impact that these cuts could have on our nation's security infrastructure, and I believe it is past time for Washington to find a solution.

I couldn't help but think about sequestration on Saturday as I attended a christening ceremony for the U.S. Navy's newest Virginia Class submarine, the MINNESOTA (SSN 783), in Newport News. Our shipbuilders are the finest in the world, and they deliver the finest ships in the world to our Navy - which is also second to none. As sequestration approaches, we cannot forget how critical it is for the future security of our nation that we assess our military budgets strategically and with consideration for what our capabilities need to be. Assets like the MINNESOTA are vital for our overall military strategy, and sequestration would have a devastating effect on our overall force structure. \$487 billion in cuts to defense were already put in place in 2011. To now implement an additional \$500 billion in cuts mandated by sequestration is simply reckless, and Congress must return to Washington instead of ignoring this problem.

Finally, I was humbled last week to receive the "Award for Manufacturing Legislative Excellence" from the National Association of Manufacturers, for my efforts to support manufacturing. The manufacturing sector is so important to Virginia's economy and to our nation, providing many jobs to our skilled citizens. The defense industrial base as well depends on a robust manufacturing sector, and I have been proud to support policies that free up the ability of our small businesses to expand, innovate, and create jobs. The government must ensure that its efforts are not hindering our job-creating small businesses.

I hope you will all continue to stay in touch. I can be reached via telephone at [\(202\) 225-4261](tel:202-225-4261) , through email on my website (

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