

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2014

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize our Nation's public servants and to thank them for their important contributions to our country.

In every community across America, federal employees work to make sure the government is effective and keep us safe; their daily contributions to their fellow citizens and to the cause of freedom are simply innumerable. And in America's First District, there are many hardworking and dedicated patriots who serve the people of this nation every day.

As we celebrate Public Service Recognition Week, which started on Sunday, May 4, and ends on Saturday, May 10, I want to express my utmost gratitude to the country's federal employees as well as our dedicated state, county and local public servants for their tireless service. I am proud to represent the tens of thousands of federal employees and retirees who live in the First District of Virginia.

Congress charges these individuals with important duties and expects these duties to be performed with the highest caliber of expertise – but rather than being recognized for their service, these public servants see their salary and benefits continually used as a pawn in the game of politics. I have opposed these efforts because I believe that as Congress continues to ask our federal civilian workforce to do more with less, we should instead be standing with them in recognition of their service.

From the CIA agents on the front lines of the War on Terror to the FBI agents finding suspected terrorists – our Nation's public servants perform critical national security jobs that make our country a safer place. As the House votes to establish a new Select Committee on Benghazi, it is important to note that the Foreign Service officers representing our government at the U.S. consulate and annex where the September 11, 2012, attack occurred were federal employees.

In addition to serving abroad, our Nation's federal employees frequently risk their lives to protect us here at home as well. The Customs and Border Patrol and DEA agents working to fight illegal immigration, human trafficking and drug running operations are federal employees.

These men and women often get little to no recognition for their work, but day in and day out are repeatedly put in harm's way.

We must also recognize the public servants who are not directly in dangerous situations, but on a daily basis perform duties imperative to our safety. Defense civilian riggers, machinists, refuelers and engineers who repair sophisticated weaponry systems at our Army depots, Air Force bases and shipyards are the federal employees who support our military personnel.

The scientists at Department of Energy laboratories, NASA astronauts, engineers and researchers all work to keep America competitive in the ever increasingly global economy. Meteorologists at the weather service track life-threatening storms, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis and blizzards so that we can prepare to the best of our ability for inclement weather and natural disasters.

The nurses and doctors at the VA who mind for our veterans and wounded warriors, researchers at NIH working to find a cure for cancer, diabetes and Alzheimer's – all are federal employees. The FDA public health inspectors who track E. coli and salmonella outbreaks to make certain that our food is safe to eat are federal employees.

Air traffic controllers at FAA work to have safe skies for travelers. Federal firefighters protect homes and businesses during a national forest fire. National Park Service rangers facilitate safe hiking on historic grounds and camping in our parks and tours of our battlefields.

These are only but a few of the vital services federal employees provide to our Congressional Districts and the Nation alike. The federal workforce is full of dedicated and committed citizens who exemplify patriotism in everything they do and I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring them for their service to ensure the security of our Nation.