

Wittman decries the undocumented

Rep. Robert J. "Rob" Wittman, who represents part of Fauquier County, expressed concern Wednesday about undocumented children being housed on military bases.

The Department of Defense has an agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services to temporarily keep the children at installations including Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, the Army's Fort Sill in Oklahoma and Naval Base Ventura County in California.

After a briefing on the matter, however, Wittman released a statement saying that he fears how the deal could affect the military's "overall readiness posture and the general capacity of our armed forces."

The Republican said that defense officials can't be sure how long the arrangement will continue and that he's concerned about troops being asked to complete tasks for which they're not prepared.

"During a time of significant danger around the world and tight budgets, this is a serious risk," said Wittman, chairman of the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee.

Nearly 39,000 undocumented children came to the U.S. in fiscal 2013, according to the Congressional Research Service, and more than 47,000 have already entered the country in this fiscal year.

"I'm also concerned for the safety and welfare of these children, who are being housed in a system that is ill-equipped to handle them, with multiple agencies and departments essentially sharing responsibility," Wittman said.

In addition, the congressman said he fears that the decision to house the youngsters could set a precedent.

"DoD should have consulted with Congress before committing its resources to this mission, and I will continue to push for

answers," he said.

The estimated cost of the arrangement, according to Wednesday's briefing, is nearly \$500,000 per month.

