

Congressman Rob Wittman
Weekly Washington Update
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When I was first elected to Congress back in December, I was appointed to serve on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. As a member of this committee I have the opportunity to take part in several key foreign policy debates ranging from Iran's nuclear program to international efforts to combat AIDS in Africa and I even had the privilege of questioning Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a hearing on the President's foreign policy budget.

Recently, I was given another committee assignment, to the House Committee on Natural Resources. This assignment will allow me to employ my background in public health, shellfish sanitation and conservation to craft sound policy that will benefit the First District and help preserve the natural beauty of our area.

Within the committee, I was placed on the Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee and the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee. These two subcommittees are ideal opportunities for me to use the skills I have developed over the years to advocate on behalf of our historic public spaces and for a number of industries that thrive in the First District, such as our watermen and the seafood industry.

As many people know, for several years I was the Field Director for the Division of Shellfish Sanitation in the Virginia Department of Health. Thousands of my constituents are employed as watermen in the First District, and even more are sport fishermen. Growing up I worked on both commercial and sport fishing boats. I myself have been known to enjoy a day on a boat, fishing for striped bass on the Potomac River. I understand the issues both commercial and sport fishermen are facing, and I am hopeful that my time spent working in the field with the seafood industry has given me a unique perspective that will allow me tackle those issues as a member of the Fisheries Subcommittee.

As a member of the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee I will be able to represent the public lands and historic locations that exist all throughout the District. We are blessed with so much history in the First District. In my home county of Westmoreland alone, one can visit the birthplace of Presidents Washington and Monroe, and the birthplace of General Robert E. Lee. One can visit Yorktown, Williamsburg, and Fredericksburg, to name a few spots, and learn all about America's evolution as a nation. Just last week, I visited the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park to learn more about its national park status. As a member of this subcommittee I will be able to ensure that our historic treasures are preserved for many future generations and will be able to continue working for more of our picturesque open spaces to receive the protection and federal status they need to remain beautiful for us all.

As a member of Congress it is so important to be in a position to use your talents and background to effect positive results for your constituents. I have spent much of my professional life working to preserve and protect our natural resources while also helping our vital industries

thrive in a safe and environmentally sound manner. Here in Washington, with my newest committee assignment, I will have the opportunity to serve the First District by using my background and experiences to pass legislation that will ensure our economic and environmental interests are represented in the best possible way.