



Wittman's Weekly: March's Stories You Don't Want to Miss

This March marks one year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. One year later, our lives remain fundamentally altered as the pandemic continues. But as an ever-growing number of Americans receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

That sense of optimism was readily apparent when I visited the King George YMCA vaccination site last Friday. Thanks to the tireless work of area healthcare professionals, more Virginians are now safe from the pandemic as the number of vaccinated patients at this site doubled from last week's numbers.



As we continue to roll out the COVID-19 vaccine, many Virginians face significant disparities in vaccine access. Our minority communities, rural Virginians, and others still lack equal access to the vaccine, despite often being at the greatest risk. Earlier this month, I joined the Rappahannock Area Health District for a Fireside chat on ways to better provide increased access to the COVID-19 vaccine for these communities.



Even as the pandemic causes such profound suffering, it also reveals the communal bonds which tie the nation together, no matter how similar or different we may be. It's that sense of community that brings out the best in us.

Throughout the pandemic, we watched as everyday Americans stepped up to help their neighbors. Many of those were small businesses who went out of their way to help, even as they bore the financial brunt of the shutdown. For those actions, I introduced a resolution honoring small business suppliers, who so often went above and beyond to serve their friends and neighbors during the pandemic.



But even as we finally begin to overcome this crisis, we cannot lose sight of the other threats we face. Paramount amongst those threats is that of Great Powers Competition from our geopolitical rivals such as China. Despite the dire threats we face, some have called for drastic and devastating cuts to the defense budget. These cuts would be nothing short of catastrophic.

Historically, weakness is shown to lead to conflict. Faced with threats such as China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and others, if we give our rivals an opening, they may quickly become our enemies. If we wish to secure peace, we must invest in the military strength needed to deter conflict. That's why I invited every Member who called for these cuts to a classified briefing on the enormity of the threats we face. Earlier this week, I joined David Asman on Fox Business to discuss that letter and the importance of funding the priorities outlined in the National Defense Strategy.



We cannot ignore the threats we face abroad, but we also cannot ignore the threats we face here at home. After the Biden Administration's policies, actions and rhetoric invited a surge of illegal immigration; our border has been completely overwhelmed.

Both Republicans and Democrats agree, border security is national security, and we cannot place the security of the American homeland in jeopardy to satisfy the progressive ideological demands. That's why I wrote a letter urging both Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas and Speaker Pelosi to take the immediate and decisive action necessary to secure our southern border.



Sincerely,

Rob



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