

In yesterday's Winston Salem Journal, congressional spending was questioned, including decisions made by local Republican Congressmen Virginia Foxx and Patrick McHenry.

Congressional delegates spent more than \$1 million on bulk mailings to constituents during the last session of Congress. The mailings were sent using the congressional franking privilege, which allows representatives to use their signature instead of a stamp. While on average, House members spent \$55,000 each on mail using the privilege, Banner Elk's Virginia Foxx sent more than 1.6 million pieces of mail, totaling \$326,642. She defended the expense yesterday. According to Foxx, a certain amount of money is allotted for congressmen to spend. She does not regret her choice to devote so much to bulk mailings.

Foxx said she could spend the money on employee trips and furniture, but she chooses to spend it on communicating with constituents.

All mailings are approved by a non-partisan group in Congress. She felt the article was misleading, implying she could write whatever she wanted.

It's her best way of getting in touch with her constituents, she said.

Information on bills being passed and Foxx's stance on the issues, as well as surveys about how constituents feel are among mailings, Foxx said.

Foxx also mentioned her staff salaries are some of the lowest in the state.

Congressman Patrick McHenry came in second in bulk mail spending totals, with 762,507 pieces of mail at a cost of \$132,963. The Congressman was not available for comment.