

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

It would appear that the calls from Democrats for unity following the inauguration were short lived. This week the House passed a budget resolution, without Republican input, that will significantly add to the deficit and cost American jobs. Further, while I hope to eventually find common ground with President Biden, I am shocked by his governing through executive orders and actions thus far. Also this week, I cosponsored a bill to prohibit terrorists at Guantanamo Bay from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine ahead of American citizens, which had been ordered by the Biden Administration, and I wrote a letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security to express my concern with the many Presidential actions aimed at weakening our border security. Additionally, I sat down with TV 3 in Harrisonburg earlier in the week to discuss a number of other pressing matters facing our Nation like the need to prioritize vaccine distribution over political issues like a Senate impeachment trial to remove President Trump from office.

Reckless Spending:

In late December, President Trump signed a fifth COVID relief bill into law, and together with previously enacted stimulus legislation, more than \$1 trillion remains unspent. There is no denying that our families, farmers, and small businesses need Congress' continued support as we navigate through this pandemic, but they do not need a partisan \$1.9 trillion package riddled with liberal wish list items that will cripple our economy, such as minimum wage increases that will destroy 1.3 million jobs, hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars to bailout poorly-run state governments, and tax increases.

In fact, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office just this week announced that they project our economy to bounce back over the next several months, even without trillions of dollars in additional stimulus aid from Congress, and that much of our recovery hinges on the pace of vaccinations. That is where our focus should be – ensuring that those who want to be vaccinated receive it and ensuring that we reopen our businesses and schools as soon as possible. If we move forward with plans to spend an additional \$1.9 trillion, we will have spent \$6 trillion in the last year alone on COVID related 'stimulus'. That comes out to more than \$17,000 per individual, \$69,000 per household, and is larger than the GDP of every country on Earth other than the U.S. and China. Even worse, this bill was brought to the Floor directly without any action by the Budget Committee to review and assess its sustainability. For these

many reasons, I could not support this resolution. Instead, I supported legislation that focuses taxpayer dollars on vaccine production and distribution, which would actually benefit our country.



Vaccinating Terrorists:

Last week the Department of Defense authorized sending COVID-19 vaccines to Guantanamo Bay for terrorists held at the base, including for individuals like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed who was one of the masterminds of the attacks on September 11th. After significant pushback from Republican Members of Congress, the Department of Defense has put a "pause" on this plan as they reevaluate the situation. However, a simple 'pause' is not sufficient. It is outrageous that the Biden Administration would even consider prioritizing terrorists over American citizens when it comes to getting the vaccine. That is why I cosponsored the *Vaccinate Americans, Not Terrorists Act*. This legislation would prohibit the federal government from providing COVID-19 vaccines to detainees when there are Americans still in line. Specifically, the bill blocks the action so long as there are states, territories, and tribes with outstanding requests for vaccines, or if there are American servicemembers who have not yet received the vaccine but want it. I have also signed on to a [resolution](#) denouncing the Department of Defense's decision and asserting the importance of prioritizing citizens.



Open Borders:

Since being sworn in, President Biden has signed 42 Executive Actions - more than any president in history at this point in the term. His most recent Executive Actions signed this week unilaterally repeal Trump-era immigration policies intended to deter illegal migration at the U.S.-Mexico border. These orders eliminate the requirement for illegal immigrants to repay the federal government if they receive public benefits and make it far easier for aliens to claim asylum without just cause. This is in addition to President Biden previously halting construction of the border wall, reducing immigration enforcement, and ordering non-citizens to be included in the Census. These policies weaken the integrity of our immigration system and encourage

aliens to make the dangerous journey to our southern border and attempt to enter the United States illegally. For this reason, I recently joined my colleagues in writing to the Secretary of Homeland Security urging for a reversal of these policies. The full letter can be found [here](#).

EXECUTIVE ORDERS IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS



Issues of the Day:

This week I joined TV 3 in Harrisonburg to discuss a number of pressing issues facing our Nation. We discussed the need to prioritize targeted COVID aid and vaccine distribution over impeachment, the overreach of President Biden's executive orders, and efforts to unify the country. Please find the interview below.



HIRE Vets Medallion:

The U.S. Department of Labor's HIRE (Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing) Vets Medallion recognizes the meaningful and verifiable efforts undertaken by job creators to hire and retain veterans. If you are or know of a business who deserves to be honored for giving back to those who have given so much to our country, [please click here](#) for nomination details. In 2019 and 2020, [Tactical & Survival Specialties, Inc.](#) of Harrisonburg was awarded the medallion for their longstanding tradition of supporting our troops after they leave the service. Also recognized last year was Rubicon Planning of Roanoke which earned the distinction of a Small Gold award for the first time. Applications are now open and will run through April 30, 2021.



COVID-19 Update:

As of February 6, 2021, Virginia has had 526,176 total cases of COVID-19, including confirmed lab tests and clinical diagnoses, according to the Virginia Department of Health. The current death toll in the Commonwealth stands at 6,773. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of February 6, 843,442 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 178,708 people are fully vaccinated. As of February 6, 2,012 veterans have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at the Salem VA. 1,166,600 total vaccine doses have been distributed throughout the state.

All Health District in the Sixth District have moved into **Phase 1b** of vaccinations. To find a vaccination center in your area, please call one of the District Health offices below. Further, beginning Tuesday, February 9, certain CVS pharmacies throughout the Commonwealth will be accepting COVID-19 vaccination appointments to eligible individuals. Appointments will be available starting Thursday, February 11. To learn more, click [here](#).

Lord Fairfax Health District

Shenandoah: (540) 459-3733

Warren: (540) 635-3159

Page: (540) 743-6528

Central Shenandoah Health District

Bath: (540) 839-7246

Harrisonburg: (540) 574-5102

Highland: (540) 468-2270

Lexington: (540) 463-3185

Staunton: (540) 332-7830

Waynesboro: (540) 949-0137

Alleghany Health District

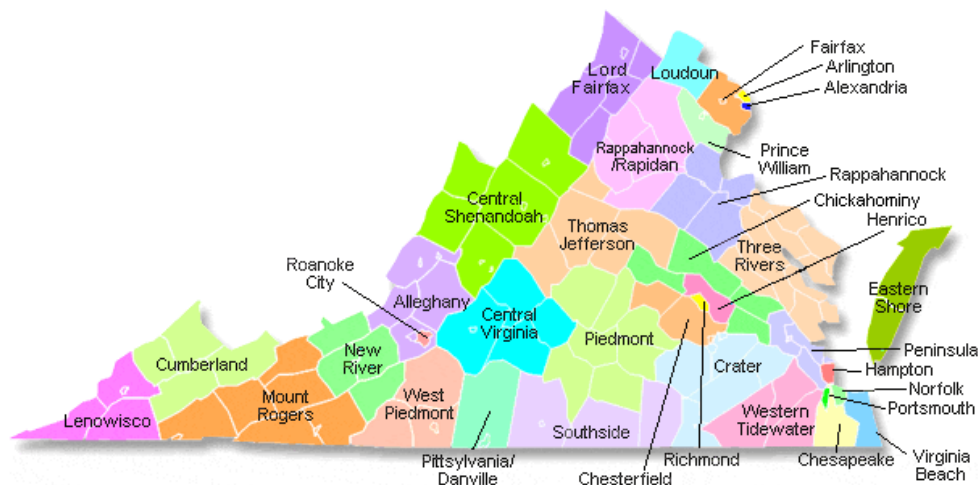
Botetourt: (540) 473-8240

Roanoke County/Salem: (540) 387-5530

Roanoke County/Vinton: (540) 857-7800

Roanoke City Health District

Roanoke City: (540) 283-5050



Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Congressman. If my office can ever be of assistance, please contact my Washington office at (202) 225-5431.

For the latest updates from Washington and across the Sixth District, please follow my [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

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