
News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN
BEN CLINE



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

Coming nearly two months late, President Biden released his \$5.8 trillion budget this week that does little for working families and reads like a Christmas list of wishes and wants for liberal lawmakers and special interest groups. As a member of both the House Budget and Appropriations Committees, I had the chance to question the Director of Management and Budget about soaring inflation, as well as the Secretary of Health and Human Services about the influence of teachers' unions undue influence on the CDC's school reopening guidance. Further, over the past few days, I have had the opportunity to address several of the President's self-made crises, particularly related to the border and energy costs. Rather than working to improve these issues, this Administration seems determined to make them worse. Additionally, I acted this week to make it easier for seniors and those planning for retirement to save. Overall, it was a productive week in Washington, and rest assured that I will continue fighting for Sixth District Residents when I return to DC on Monday.

Biden's Tax-and-Spend Budget:

This week, President Biden released his \$5.8 trillion Budget for FY23, and it is more of the same liberal, tax-and-spend policies that have led us to the economic crisis we're facing. Under the proposal, deficits and debt would continue to grow over the next decade, leading to even higher inflation and greater financial hardship for the American people. This budget leaves families out to dry, and I questioned the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on Tuesday about this Administration's runaway spending.

- If Biden's budget were adopted, national debt would reach a new record by the end of the decade, growing by over \$15 trillion.

- Under Biden's budget, the national debt would spike to \$45 trillion by 2032 - about \$347,000 per household.
- Biden's budget includes nearly \$2.5 trillion in new or increased taxes.
- Biden's budget would increase the corporate tax rate to 28%, higher than communist China, which the Tax Foundation estimated would kill 159,000 jobs, shrink the economy by \$720 billion, and cut wages for low-income Americans.



Holding HHS Accountable:

On Wednesday, a report from the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis revealed that the Centers and Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) allowed the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to re-write critical portions of the Biden Administration's school reopening guidance. While the CDC initially planned to issue guidance that would have been more favorable toward opening schools, the agency reversed course after consulting with teachers union bosses. The AFT was given a non-public copy of the CDC's draft language about a week before it was set to be published, and in that time, the union was able to insert its own language verbatim. It is a disgrace that the Biden Administration put teachers' unions above parents and students. Instead of following the science, they kept schools closed, leading to poor test scores and higher rates of youth depression, substance abuse, and suicide. President Biden must be held accountable for putting politics above children, and this week I pressed the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services about the matter in the Appropriations Committee.



Border Security:

The President takes an oath promising to uphold and defend the laws of this country and to protect our Nation's citizens. Yet this Administration seems determined to neglect that pledge.

With more than 2 million migrants having illegally entered the United States since President Biden took office, there is an undeniable crisis at our southern border, and it is a direct result of the President's halting of construction of the border wall, ending the Remain in Mexico policy, and reimplementing Catch and Release. Now, instead of taking steps to rectify the situation he created, President Biden is preparing to pour fuel on the fire by lifting Title 42, which has allowed Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to immediately expel illegal aliens after entering the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. This Trump-era code has been essential to mitigating a worsening crisis, and officials within the President's own Department of Homeland Security are sounding the alarms about the consequences that would come from lifting this policy. Officials say that if this policy is revoked it would cause a massive run on the border and we could see upwards of 18,000 illegal crossings a day – that's 6.5 million migrants a year. CBP can barely keep up as it is, let alone with that kind of surge. President Biden is failing the American people, and his neglect at the border is having catastrophic consequences.



Energy Crisis:

During the Trump administration, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) was built up when President Trump added 30 million barrels of oil in 2020. Now, the Biden Administration has announced that it will release roughly a million barrels of oil a day from U.S. reserves for the next six months in an effort to lower gas prices. These 180 million barrels represent the largest ever draw from our emergency oil reserve and 25 percent of the total SPR reserves when at peak capacity. This move follows President Biden's release of 30 million barrels in early March, and 50 million barrels of oil in November of 2021, which did nothing to prevent a spike in energy prices.

Make no mistake, this plan is dangerous. The SPR is supposed to be used for national security emergencies and major weather events, not for President Biden to use as a political Hail Mary when his policies fail. Drawing down our strategic reserves by more than 25 percent poses a national security risk, and represents a large expense to American taxpayers because it will be refilled under skyrocketing gas prices.



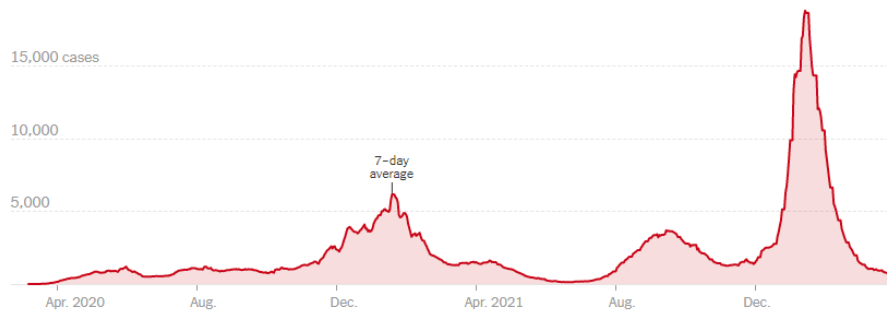
Supporting Seniors:

Far too many Americans reach the age of retirement without having the savings they need. In fact, 50 percent of households are “at risk” of not having enough to maintain their living standards in retirement. To help combat this issue, I was pleased this week to join a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers in passing the *SECURE Act*, which will help Americans successfully save for retirement by expanding coverage and increasing retirement savings, simplifying the current retirement system, and protecting Americans’ retirement accounts. Specifically, the legislation will help older Americans by taking the below actions.

- **Creates new tax credits to encourage small employers to offer retirement plans.** It fully offsets paperwork costs and provides a per-employee credit of up to \$1,000 for employer matching contributions.
- **Support for employees with student loan debt.** The bill allows employer matching contributions to a retirement plan for employees that are making payments on student loans.
- **Simplifying the way small businesses offer stock ownership to employees.** Cuts red tape and offers new tax incentives for small business employee stock ownership plans.
- **Helps employees save for retirement earlier.** Employees would be automatically enrolled in their company’s 401(k) plan, while still providing a chance to opt out
- **Americans would have greater flexibility to keep more of their savings for longer.** The bill raises the age for required minimum distributions to 75, so individuals don’t have to start withdrawing before they’re ready.
- **Helps late career workers catch up in saving for retirement.** Late-career workers – who may finally be earning the highest salaries of their careers after spending years at lower wages – can contribute a larger amount to “catch up” on their retirement savings, doubled from \$5,000 a year to \$10,000 a year
- **Helps lower-income households build their savings** with the bigger and simpler Saver’s Credit.
- **Prioritizing military families.** The bill provides a tax credit for small employers that make plan benefits more available to military spouses (who can be subject to frequent relocation or job changes).

COVID-19 Update:

Last week in Virginia there was an average of 8.5 daily cases of COVID-19 per every 100,000 residents. This is down from an average of 9.7 cases from one week prior. This week's positivity rate was 3.4%, down from 3.9% from last week. For more information, click [here](#).



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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