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News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN  
**BEN CLINE**



## **Sixth District Perspectives** *with Congressman Ben Cline*

Students across the Sixth District are finally returning to their classrooms and their athletic fields, and I was honored to celebrate their achievements this week by visiting government students at Grace Christian School in Staunton and commending Riverheads High School football on the House Floor for winning their fifth consecutive state championship. Our country also celebrated National Police Week to recognize the tremendous service of our men and women in law enforcement. Unfortunately, this week our Nation was also reminded that leadership matters as we watched events in the Middle East further erode, saw a forced closure of a pipeline resulting in gasoline shortages and long lines, and the Department of Labor confirming that consumer prices for goods and services took its largest monthly jump in more than a decade. Finally, in an effort to continue to make myself accessible to those I am honored to represent, I held my tenth telephone town hall on Thursday evening. It was a productive week, and I will continue to advocate on behalf of the residents of the Sixth District as we head into another week of legislative business.

### **Standing With Israel:**

Following protests turned riots in east Jerusalem earlier this month, we've seen the conflict between Israel and Palestine take a violent turn that's become the worst in the region since 2000. Now, more than 100 people have been killed and hundreds injured in this conflict as Israel and Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist group, have exchanged a barrage of rockets over the past week. However, while Israel's defensive maneuvers have been aimed at Hamas' military installations, the terror group has targeted Israeli civilian populations with their rockets. Equally

troubling is the fact the Biden Administration has been actively engaging in negotiations with Iran, which is widely known as the funding source of Hamas.

I have long stood by Israel, the only democracy and our greatest ally in the Middle East. In Congress, I have cosponsored bipartisan legislation opposing the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and other efforts to delegitimize the state of Israel. Additionally, I cosponsored the *United States-Israel Cooperation Enhancement and Regional Security Act*, which seeks to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions, such as Israel's "Iron Dome" missile defense system to block enemy rockets.

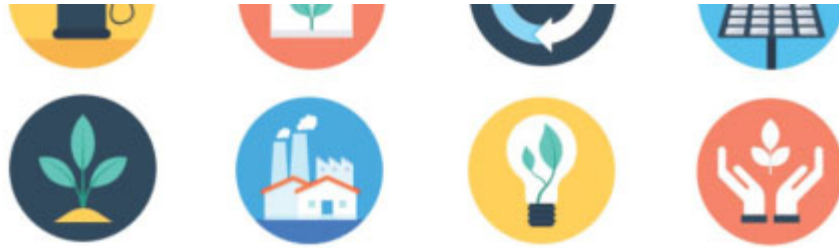
In the 2008 Vice-Presidential debate, then-Senator Biden said, "No one...has been a better friend to Israel than Joe Biden." Yet now President Biden merely says Israel "has a right to defend itself" rather than telling Hamas, or any other antagonistic force, to not take aggressive action toward Israel. This Administration must make clear that an attack on Israel should be seen as an attack on the United States and that we are prepared to support our ally by any means necessary.



### Energy Crisis:

On Friday, May 7, the country's largest fuel pipeline, Colonial Pipeline, was the victim of a ransomware cyberattack, which forced it to temporarily shut down all pipeline operations and caused significant fuel shortages and outages throughout the southeast United States. At the height of its shortage, Virginia experienced fuel outages at 52 percent of the Commonwealth's gas stations. On May 12, Colonial Pipeline resumed operations and a *Jones Act* exemption was granted lifting certain restrictions to enable fuel to be transported from the Gulf Coast to the East Coast more quickly. While these two actions are a positive sign, after having conversations with the Governor's office, it is clear that it will still be several days before our fuel supply returns fully back to normal. Despite this situation being caused by a cyberattack, it highlighted the need for an all-of-the-above approach to secure our energy independence. In the 21st Century, we cannot rely on one source of energy or our adversaries overseas to power our Nation.





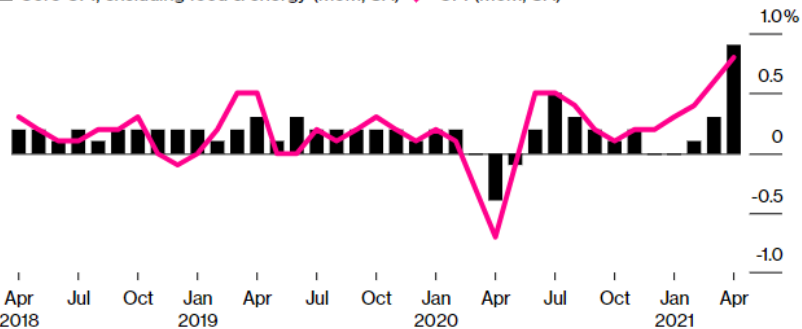
**Rising Inflation:**

This week, we learned that the Consumer Price Index rose by nearly 1 percent last month, marking the fastest increase of inflation since 2008. Further, the monthly gain in core inflation is now the largest since 1981. This means that Americans pay more to work, eat, and live in Biden’s America. Despite this, President Biden still wants to spend trillions of dollars and impose the largest tax increase in history even though Americans are already paying for this President's disastrous policies. Now is not the time to raise taxes which will only burden the American people with even higher prices. Inflation is here and will likely get worse, which is what President Biden ought to be focused on combating.

**Heating Up**

U.S. core and headline inflation both jumped more than forecast in April

■ Core CPI, excluding food & energy (MoM, SA)    ▲ CPI (MoM, SA)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

**National Police Week:**

During this National Police Week, we recognize the men and women of law enforcement who protect and serve our cities, counties, and states all across this great country. Each day, police officers put on their uniform and badge knowing the danger they face but do so selflessly in an effort to keep their neighbors and communities safe. Since 1786, more than 22,000 police officers in the United States have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their fellow man, including 125 just this year. And sadly, tragedy struck here in the Sixth District just a few short months ago. This week, we particularly remember and honor Stanley Police Officer, Nick Winum, who was killed in the line of duty. People like Nick, who are willing to lay their own lives down for others, are the reason that we can all sleep soundly at night. This week, we lift all of our law enforcement officers up, show them the respect they have earned and deserve, and thank them for their overwhelming contributions to our society.





### **5X State Champions:**

This week, I took to the House Floor to recognize the Riverheads High School football team of Augusta County, which recently won the Commonwealth's Class 1 State Football Championship. After a close first quarter, the Gladiators put up 34 points in the second quarter propelling them to a resounding 65 to 29 victory over the Galax Maroon Tide. Riverheads has now won a notable five consecutive state titles, and senior running back Zac Smiley, who led the team with 121 rushing yards, said, "It almost feels normal -- but it's not." The Riverheads' running game had been strong all season, which allowed the Gladiators to catch the Maroon Tide off guard with an impressive three passing touchdowns, culminating in an all-around unstoppable offense. When asked what the pressure was like to win again, head coach Robert Casto said, "We didn't get caught up in all that stuff." He said their victory, "was just a byproduct of the hard work these kids have put in." Indeed, every state championship is earned, not given, and this squad certainly earned it. Congratulations to the players, coaches, and staff on their remarkable accomplishment.



### **Grace Christian School:**

Since taking office, it has been a priority of mine to meet with students across the Sixth District from Faith Christian School in Roanoke to Warren County High School in Front Royal and everywhere in between. As they prepare for the next steps in their lives, whether that be continuing their education, entering the workforce, or joining the military I wish to instill in them the importance of service to others. This week, I visited Grace Christian School in Staunton and enjoyed hearing from senior government classes and discussing the "Capacities and Limitations for Impacting our Government as a Congressman." Further, I listened to their concerns and answered students' questions about the issues that are important to them. As more schools begin to reopen for in-person learning, I look forward to meeting with students and fostering the value of public service.





**Connecting with Constituents:**

Before the Coronavirus pandemic began, I promised to hold in-person town halls throughout the Sixth District. In fact, since being elected, I have hosted 25 in-person town halls – with at least one being held in each locality throughout our region. As restrictions begin to lift, I hope to continue those sorts of in-person forums in the near future, but for now, virtual town halls remain one of the best options to connect with constituents to ensure their voices are heard in Washington. While my first seven telephone town halls were District-wide, I've begun hosting regional forums, which allow me to focus on the unique issues facing each of our individual communities. This week, I was pleased to host my tenth telephone town hall for residents of Lynchburg, Amherst, and Bedford. I look forward to holding similar events like this throughout the District in the future.





### **COVID-19 Update:**

As of May 15, 2021, Virginia has had 670,184 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 11,018. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of May 15th, 4,356,689 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 3,414,563 people are fully vaccinated.

This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that fully vaccinated individuals can safely resume most activities indoors or outdoors without masks or distancing, regardless of the size of gatherings. This is great news and a huge step forward as we continue to navigate the pandemic.



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.

*Ben Clive*

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