

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

It was quite a week in Washington as all eyes were on President Biden's first meeting with the leaders of the G-7 nations, NATO, and Russia. Now the President must turn his attention to policies that grow the economy, combat inflation, help working class Americans, and secure the border. Legislatively this week, I continued to be involved in discussions among various groups that are trying to come together in agreement on an infrastructure package. With many proposals being floated, rest assured I will keep you apprised as the situation develops. Further, Congress passed and the President signed legislation designating Juneteenth (June 19) as a federal holiday to recognize the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Additionally, this week, I fought to defend Americans' First and Second Amendment rights by joining the Campus Free Speech Caucus and writing to the ATF regarding a proposed rule that would unfairly tax certain gun owners. I also had the opportunity to meet with a number of advocacy groups from Virginia's Sixth District and honored a high school baseball team in our area for winning their conference's state championship. This week, we also recognize all of the dads across the District and wish them a very happy Father's Day. It was certainly a busy few days, but I will return to Washington next week to continue advocating on behalf of the constituents I am honored to represent.

Caving to Russia:

This week marked President Biden's first meeting with Russian President Putin. Disappointingly, yet not unexpectedly, the Biden Administration has failed to back up their tough talk with strong action. Criminals from Russia have launched several cyberattacks on

U.S. soil that have gone unpunished by both the Russian government and the Biden Administration. Most recently was the ransomware attack on the Colonial pipeline, which was perpetrated by a group within Russia and caused alarming price hikes and shortages of gasoline across the East Coast. To make matters worse, during the summit, President Biden gave Putin a list of sixteen American targets that were off-limits to attack. This is like wrapping a yellow ribbon around your valuables to make it easier for a burglar to find. The United States as a whole should be off-limits to Russian cyberattacks.

Further, in blatant defiance of the *U.S. Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act*, the Biden Administration has refused to implement mandatory sanctions after Putin's regime poisoned and arrested opposition activist Alexei Navalny. This reveals the current Administration's passive stance on the egregious human rights violations in Russia. Additionally, President Biden has done nothing to protect our ally Ukraine, despite mounting Russian tensions as Putin continues to order more and more troops to the Ukrainian border. Finally, after canceling the Keystone Pipeline here at home, President Biden waived mandatory sanctions surrounding Putin's Nord Stream 2 Pipeline that Congress has mandated in a bipartisan effort. The use of this pipeline will endanger Ukraine and empower the Kremlin.

Improving Infrastructure:

My Republican colleagues and I are ready to work on bipartisan solutions for improving America's infrastructure. However, the President's proposal is a \$1.9 trillion "social justice" and "climate justice" initiative masquerading as an infrastructure plan that will raise taxes, hurt the US economy, advance unrelated Democrat policies, and dramatically increase the size of the government. Worse yet, only about 5% of the bill actually goes toward infrastructure such as roads and bridges, with much of the funding being directed toward the Green New Deal and the "Care Economy." Some proposals from the far-left go even further, reaching price tags of \$6+ trillion. As a member of the Problem Solvers Caucus, I am working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop a plan that is fiscally responsible, not simply a climate bill, and ensures that rural communities like ours are not left behind.



Fighting for the Second Amendment:

Recently, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) proposed a rule that would make firearms with stabilizing braces subject to unjust taxation and registration requirements. Stabilizing braces are attachments that were first created to meet the needs of disabled combat veterans who are no longer able to hold or stabilize heavy firearms for recreational shooting without assistance. This tax unfairly targets disabled citizens, many of whom are veterans, and infringes upon constitutionally protected rights. Should this rule go into effect, law-abiding citizens will become felons overnight unless they turn in or destroy the

firearm, destroy the brace, or pay a \$200 tax. I joined my colleagues this week in writing to the ATF urging the agency to withdraw this proposed rule. The letter can be found [here](#). I have always been a staunch defender of the Second Amendment and will continue to advocate for its protection here in Congress.

Protecting Free Speech:

I recently joined the Campus Free Speech Caucus, which was launched by my colleagues Representatives Jim Jordan and Kat Cammack, in partnership with the Young America's Foundation. The caucus was created to defend the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and all Americans' right to free speech. We will aim to educate folks about the increasing bias of free speech in academia and shine a national spotlight on the suppression of conservative voices on college campuses. In a united front, we will hold these institutions accountable for silencing students. The fact that students are being attacked at their schools for their beliefs is simply un-American. The members of this caucus must stand strong to ensure the future leaders of our Nation are afforded the basic rights set forth by our Founding Fathers.

Space Force:

In my office, I display the seals of all our service branches as a daily reminder of the men and women to whom we owe our freedom. This week, I was pleased to be presented with the seal of our Nation's sixth and newest military branch - the seal of the United States Space Force (USSF). Space Force protects U.S. and allied interests in space and provides capabilities to the joint force. USSF supports Combatant Commands by acquiring military space systems and developing doctrines surrounding space power. Space Force will safeguard the competitive advantage of all our military branches, making America a stronger and more secure Nation now and for generations to come.





Juneteenth:

This week, Congress passed legislation, which I voted in favor of, to make Juneteenth the newest national holiday. Juneteenth, short for 'June Nineteenth,' commemorates the day that all slaves were effectively freed in the United States. It was not until June 19, 1865, almost two months after the end of the Civil War, that Union Army General Gordon Granger landed in Galveston, TX. There, he was finally able to proclaim the end of slavery in the Lone Star State, immediately freeing more than 250,000 enslaved people. This week, we take time to remember our history and recognize the overwhelming struggle that enslaved African Americans faced for far too long. To commemorate the day I spent time with celebrants at the Juneteenth festivities at Eureka Park in Roanoke.



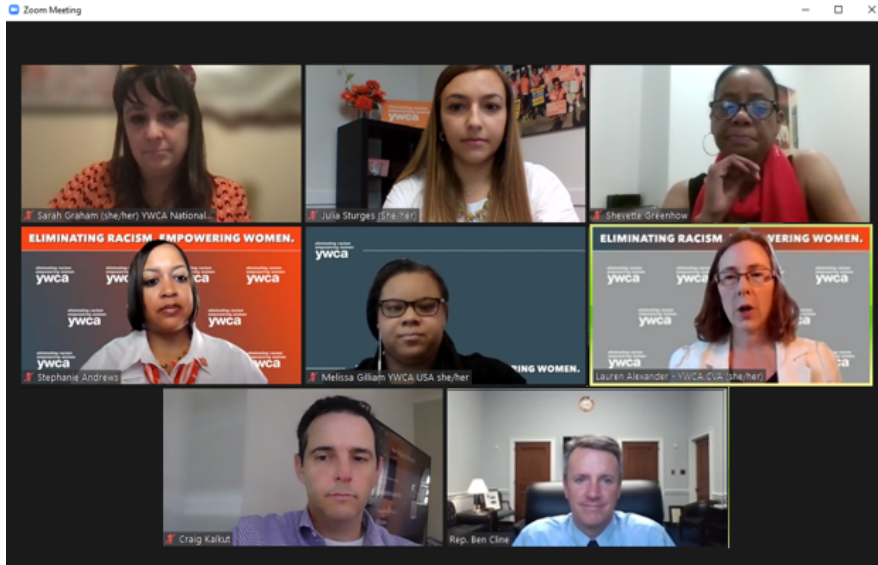


Grace Christian Warriors:

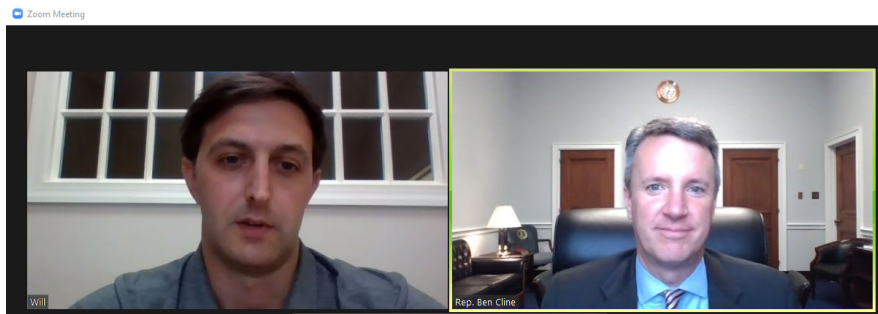
This week, I took to the House Floor to recognize the Grace Christian School Warriors baseball team for their come-from-behind victory in this year's Virginia Association of Christian Athletics State Championship. Down to their last 12 outs, the Warriors trailed four to zero, but thanks to some timely hits, their comeback started as they were able to put one run on the board in the fourth. In the bottom of the fifth, things really started turning in Grace Christian's favor. A few hits, some heads-up base running, and costly errors made by their opponents gave the Warriors a five to four lead. However, the lead didn't last long as the Bulldogs from Westover Christian Academy scored two in the top of the Sixth, but the Warriors battled back tying the game in the bottom half of the inning. Grace Christian's MVP pitcher, Isaiah Riddle, mastered Westover hitters in the top of the seventh, meaning it all came down to the Warriors' bats. First baseman Justin Hain led off with a base hit, then stole second, and moved to third on a wild pitch. With another wild pitch, Hain sprinted home and secured Grace Christian the title. Congratulations to the players, coaches, parents, and staff on an incredible season and a well-deserved win.



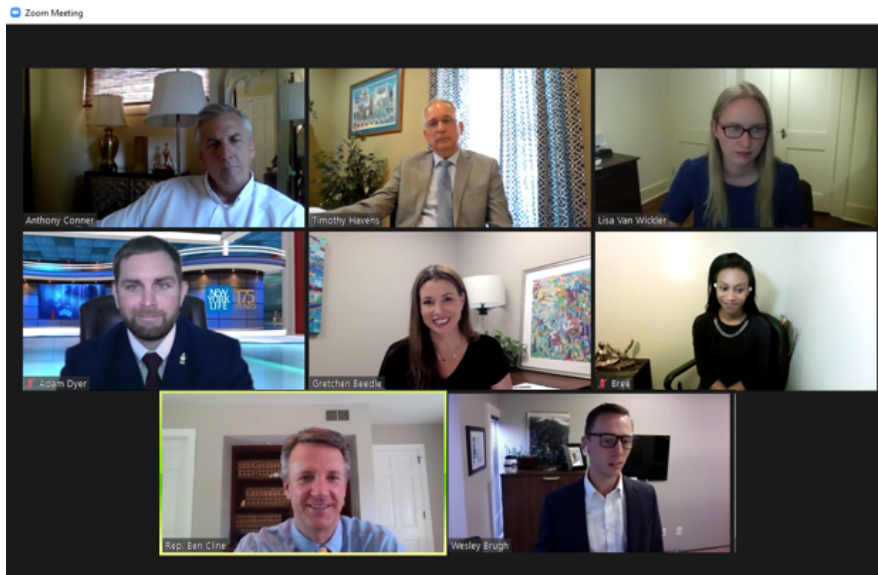
Virtual Meetings:



Young Women Christian Association



National Association of Realtors



New York Life Insurance Company

Passports:

If you are planning on traveling outside of the country anytime in the next six months, I would highly recommend you check on the validity of your passport. Due to increased demand and backlogs caused by COVID-19, it may take longer than normal to obtain or renew your

passport – the State Department currently projects a 10-12 week wait time for renewals. You can begin the process of renewing or obtaining a passport [here](#). If you are in need of assistance renewing your passport in an expedited manner, please contact one of my District offices listed at the bottom of this page.

Father's Day:

A father wears many hats - friend, coach, mentor, spiritual guide, and so much more. Today we celebrate all of the great dads across the Sixth District who do so much for their children and families. On this Father's Day, we thank dads for their hard work, support, and love.



COVID Update:

As of June 20, 2021, Virginia has had 678,649 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 11,351. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of June 20th, 4,929,523 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 4,201,439 people are fully vaccinated.



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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