



News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN
BEN CLINE



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

One of the ways in which the US Congress has abused the trust of the people over the years is in the wasteful way it spends your hard-earned money. In recent years, the House and Senate have passed massive spending bills that are out of balance and out of touch with the priorities of the American people. Unfortunately, this year is no different. In fact, this year Speaker Pelosi and House Democrats have abandoned all pretense of fiscal responsibility by refusing to even pass a House Budget plan before taking up the twelve annual appropriations bills. The Budget plan is a blueprint for spending priorities that is supposed to be submitted by the President and passed by Congress in the springtime, and without it, the House Appropriations Committee is left to spend as much as it wants on whatever priorities it chooses. One reason I accepted an assignment to the House Appropriations Committee is to bring some sense of fiscal responsibility back to this broken process, and hopefully, I can inject some of the conservative philosophy from my time in Richmond that helped us to balance our budget in Virginia year after year. As I spend my first session with my colleagues on Appropriations, I am following through on my promise to remind them of four words they have forgotten in Washington: "We can't afford it!"

Also this week, the full House addressed transportation by pushing through a partisan bill that neglected traditional infrastructure needs and instead provided nearly half its funding toward the Green New Deal. I am also continuing to fight against the abuses of Big Tech as a member of the newly-created Big Tech and Data Task Force, which will help find solutions to stop the abusive behaviors of Big Tech. I also enjoyed the opportunity to recognize the Amherst County High School Girls Softball Team for winning this year's Class 4 State Championship.

Finally, I am looking forward to hosting a Virtual Service Academy Day on Thursday for high school students interested in attending one of our Nation's Service Academies. It was a busy week, and I hope everyone has been able to relax during the Independence Day holiday weekend and enjoy some time with friends and family.

Appropriations:

The House Appropriations Committee began debating the twelve bills that make up the funding levels for government agencies and programs. Throughout the process my colleagues and I fought to rein in record levels of spending, opposed billions of dollars to fund Green New Deal initiatives, defended the rights of the unborn, and sought to protect our farmers and rural communities. One of my amendments would have prohibited millions of dollars in Federal funding from being allocated to President Biden's unauthorized Civilian Climate Corps, which would be the first major plank of the Green New Deal funded with your tax dollars. More about that amendment can be found [here](#). As the appropriations process continues, the Committee should be looking for ways to address our growing national debt, not increasing the size and reach of the Federal government.



China Coverup:

From the very beginning, the Chinese Communist Party masked the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic and hindered investigations at every turn. The American people, as well as the rest of the world, were subject to its devastating impact on lives, the economy, and families. That is why I introduced an amendment in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill to require the Biden Administration to declassify intelligence related to any potential links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendment also stated that funding authorized for the World Health Organization (WHO) in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill would be withheld until the Director of National Intelligence has declassified the aforementioned information. If passed, this amendment would have ensured a greater level of both transparency and accountability from the Federal government. Unfortunately, despite similar legislation passing unanimously in the Senate, Committee Democrats voted down my amendment, which can be found [here](#). I also introduced a separate amendment that would withhold funding from the WHO until the Secretary of State certifies and reports to Congress that the WHO has conducted a transparent international forensic investigation into the origins of COVID-19 and implemented amendments to the International Health Regulations to improve transparency in response to outbreaks of infectious diseases. This amendment was also voted down, despite significant failures at the WHO throughout the pandemic. Text of this amendment can be found [here](#).





Green New Deal in Disguise:

Rather than working across the aisle as the Senate is doing on a bipartisan infrastructure plan that does not increase the deficit, House Democrats jammed a partisan bill through the House this week that puts America on a road to nowhere. The bill was nothing but a partisan wish list that prioritized the Green New Deal agenda over the core needs of our Nation's infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Further, the legislation actually prevents the building of new roads - ripping away the ability of states to prioritize the needs of local communities. The Sixth District is in dire need of resources to modernize its aging infrastructure and relieve the congestion bottlenecks that afflict our highways – most notably is Interstate 81. Each year there are nearly 2,000 crashes on I-81, with over 25% involving heavy trucks, and more than 45 major crashes a year causing delays greater than four hours. Current conditions are not only a frustration, but a grave public safety concern. It is unconscionable that instead of focusing on public safety and improvements to our Nation's roadways, such as Interstate 81, Democrats hijacked this transportation bill for their own political messaging. I was sent to Washington to ensure our government is transparent and accountable for every action it takes. Spending \$1 out of every \$2 to comply with Green New Deal mandates is ludicrous, and I could not accept a deal that puts big cities and big government over the interests of the American taxpayers that I represent in rural America. Republicans are willing and open to negotiating realistic ways to rebuild our highways and infrastructure, but it must be done in a fiscally responsible manner.



Reining in Big Tech:

The unbridled power of Big Tech is out of control and continues to grow. The industry has often failed to protect users' personal information, curbed competition by eluding antitrust regulation, and limited the free speech of private citizens and elected officials, often from one particular political party. There is no denying Big Tech needs to be reined in, and this week I

was pleased to be appointed by Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy to serve on the Big Tech and Data Task Force. The Task Force will examine the rapid proliferation of Big Tech’s influence over the American people and their daily lives by focusing on the three areas of concern listed below. I look forward to working with my colleagues to find reasonable and realistic solutions to check the power of Big Tech.

1. **Big Tech Responsibility:** Task Force members will consider avenues to reform Section 230 of the *Communications Decency Act*
2. **Big Tech Power:** Task Force members will focus on competition issues
3. **Big Tech Data:** Task Force members will explore data privacy and security matters

State Champions:

I was pleased to recognize the Amherst County High School Girls Softball Team for winning this year’s Class 4 State Championship. It was a defensive game all around, and Amherst County pitcher, Dylan Mc Nerney, kept the Lancers in it with an incredible performance - striking out 10 batters. With the game tied zero – zero at the end of regulation, it took extra innings for the Lancers to pull off the victory against the Hanover Hawks. Before the final inning began, Head Coach Samantha Thacker told the team, “this is our time, this is our inning, we’ve got to stay settled and be patient,” – and they did just that. In the top of the eighth, two errors by the Hawks put runners on base for Amherst County with one out. When Kayleigh Combs stepped up to bat, she put the ball into play and an overthrow allowed Cheyenne Wall to race home from third giving the Lancers a one-to-nothing lead. Soon after, a wild pitch brought Maegan Lloyd home adding another run to the board. With a two-to-nothing lead heading into the bottom of the eighth, the Lancers were able to keep the Hawks scoreless, securing the team’s first-ever state title. Congratulations to the players and coaches on a great season, they earned it.



Virtual Service Academy Day:

This coming Thursday, July 8, my office will host a Virtual Service Academy Day via Microsoft Teams. Students and their parents will be provided information on the application, nomination, selection, and appointment processes. Representatives from the various service academies are expected to be present on the video-call to answer questions. An academy appointment is highly competitive, where each academy selects nominees based on moral character, scholastic achievement, physical fitness, leadership, and college admission test scores. The earlier a student begins preparation, the more competitive that student will be in the process. While Academy Days are usually held in person, this first event of the year will be held online to accommodate interested students throughout the entire Sixth District. Please stay tuned for updates on additional in-person regional Service Academy Days in the near future. To sign up for this event, please visit Eventbrite [here](#). Once your registration is submitted, a

member of my staff will provide details on how to join the video-call. Registration closes at 5pm on Wednesday, July 7.



National Dairy Month:

The Virginia Dairy Industry, directly and indirectly, supports more than 45,000 jobs and contributes \$344 million annually to the Commonwealth's economy. Unfortunately, Dairy farmers were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As normal wholesale markets such as schools and restaurants shut down, wholesale dairy farms had to shift their export strategy and fight to get their product into retail grocery stores that may have already had a contract with another dairy farm. Some farmers were simply unable to adjust their supply chain avenues in time and, due to the short shelf life of milk, much of their product was lost. As National Dairy Month comes to a close, I recognize the hardships dairy farmers have faced over the past year, and I am committed to continuing to support the industry that is so important to folks here in the Sixth District.



Independence Day:

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia and voted to officially sever ties with Great Britain. Pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, 56 brave men proclaimed to the world the sovereignty of the Thirteen Colonies. This statement, made public two days later, has since become known as the Declaration of Independence, and its words are at the very core of the American Ideal.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

I strive every day to uphold these values as your representative in Congress. I fight to ensure that the American Dream is never out of reach for any citizen in this country and that regardless of status, I will always work to preserve liberty and opportunity for all Americans.





COVID-19 Update:

As of July 5, 2021, Virginia has had 681,194 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 11,431. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of July 5th, 5,056,410 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 4,359,054 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Ben Clive".

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