

News From Congressman Ben Cline



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

This week saw Washington D.C. on two divergent tracks. The first track was hopeful, as negotiations continued over a bipartisan plan to fund our core infrastructure needs, such as roads, bridges, rail, airports, ports, and waterways, while ensuring that the bill is not financed through additional deficit spending. As negotiations continue, I am hopeful that an agreement can be reached that does not raise taxes on American families and businesses, while focusing funding on traditional infrastructure projects and not Green New Deal schemes.

The second track in Washington, DC, this week, unfortunately, was the partisan effort by the Biden Administration to add nearly \$6 trillion dollars to our debt for bloated liberal proposals that endanger our fiscal stability as a Nation and add to the burden on future generations. Not only has the Democrat-led House Appropriations Committee been rubber-stamping these spending bills, they have been adding "poison-pill" riders that reverse decades of policies and implement some of the most outrageous ideas of the radical left. As a member of the Committee, I offered and supported several amendments last week in an attempt to remove some of the most extreme provisions, but when Democrats defeated them all in party-line votes, Republicans stood up for taxpayers and voted against the billions of dollars in excessive spending.

In spite of the partisanship on the Appropriations Committee, I continue to work as a member of the Problem Solvers Caucus to promote bipartisan ideas that improve the lives of American families. For example, this week I cosponsored with Rep. Phillips (D-MN) legislation to help improve mental health services for our Veterans. In addition, I joined Reps. Massie (R-KY) and Pingree (D-ME) as a cosponsor of the *PRIME Act*, legislation to help small cattle farms by removing duplicative and onerous federal processor regulations. The bill would make it easier for local farms to compete with big meat companies and make locally raised livestock processing more widely available.

This week, I also had the opportunity to visit with a VFW post in Harrisonburg to recognize its 100th anniversary. As cities across the country lift most COVID restrictions, please do not hesitate to contact my office if you intend to visit Washington. It is an honor to serve as your Congressman, and as I head back to DC for more committee work, know that I will continue advocating on your behalf.

### **Funding the Government:**

The Appropriations Committee recently began its work of marking up the twelve pieces of legislation that will fund the Federal government for the next fiscal year. A markup is the process by which congressional committees debate, amend, and rewrite proposed legislation before a bill heads to the Floor for final consideration. Unfortunately, not only were the spending levels offered in these bills excessive, but each of the six bills the committee has thus far considered contained language known as "Poison Pills" that make bipartisan support nearly impossible.

For example, in the State and Foreign Operations bill, Democrats removed long-standing provisions to ensure that no taxpayer funds could be used for abortions. The Interior and Environment Appropriations bill would require cattle farmers to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions from their facilities (yes, it's exactly what you think). Not only would this new requirement be extremely burdensome and costly, it's impossible to achieve compliance with any certainty. This kind of misguided "Green New Deal" logic would cripple small producers and the communities they serve. Additionally, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill eliminated provisions that prohibit the closure of Guantanamo Bay and the transfer of detainees accused of terrorism to the U.S. mainland. On top of all this, nearly every one of the six bills considered last week contained double-digit spending increases, which shows no regard to the deficit that has topped \$28 trillion or to inflation rates that are at a 13-year high. As consideration of the remaining bills continues this week, I will not stop my efforts to highlight the wasteful spending in these bills and to stand up for the American taxpayers.



### **Finding the Truth:**

A recently released U.S. intelligence report confirms that three researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) fell ill in November of 2019. Their symptoms were not only consistent with COVID-19 but were also severe enough that they sought medical attention at the hospital. This revelation has sparked continued debate regarding the origins of the virus that swept across the globe and killed millions. China has denied that COVID-19 originated in the WIV, and the lab's director has denied that any of their researchers had been sick, which we know not to be true. Since the onset of the pandemic, the Chinese Communist Party has withheld

information, hindered international investigations, and even attempted to cast blame on the U.S. military for being responsible for the virus. The American people deserve to know the truth about where COVID began, which is why I recently introduced an amendment in the Appropriations Committee that would require the declassification of U.S. intelligence related to any potential links between the WIV and the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the amendment stated that funding to the World Health Organization would be withheld until such information is released. It's time we get to the bottom of the origins of the virus to help prevent future pandemics.



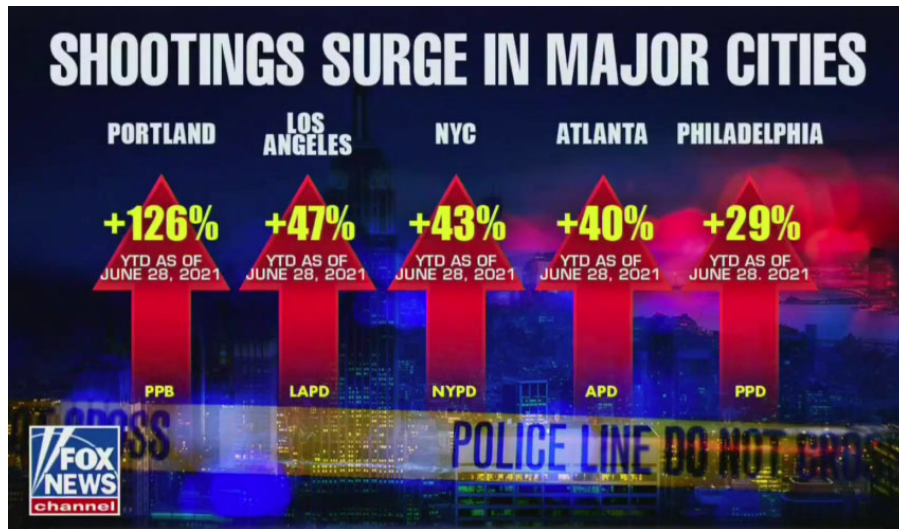
### Supporting Veterans:

This past week, I was pleased to cosponsor H.R. 3674, the *Vet Center Support Act*. This bill would greatly improve access to mental health care for our Veterans. The legislation seeks to identify the gaps in mental health care services that Veterans desperately need and will take the necessary steps to ensure our military community and their families have access to these lifesaving services. Vet Centers are spaces where local mental health care providers can offer necessary counseling and other services to Veterans, active-duty service members, and their families. Vet Centers have had tremendous success in preventing suicide, treating PTSD cases, assisting in Veteran reintegration, and helping our military community live more stable and healthier lives. Currently, experts report that 17 Veterans take their own lives every day. Making the services provided by these Vet Centers more important to help combat this national tragedy.



### Biden's Crime Surge:

This week, the White House made the absurd claim that Republicans in Congress have voted in favor of “Defunding the Police.” This statement is laughable and even the Washington Post gave the assertion [three Pinocchios](#). Republicans recognize the sacrifices law enforcement makes to protect and serve our communities and believe in providing them the resources necessary to do their jobs safely and effectively. Democrats, on the other hand, particularly the Squad, have been vocally in support of the “Defund the Police” movement. Many cities have caved to the Left’s wishes and the results have been glaring. On top of other violent crime, shootings are up 126% in Portland, 43% in New York City, 47% in Los Angeles, and 40% in Atlanta compared to the same time period in 2020. We must get this situation under control, and it begins with supporting the police.



**VFW Post 632:**

Founded in 1921, the Rion-Bowman VFW Post 632 was the first Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter founded in the Shenandoah Valley and is one of the oldest in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Combat Veterans of every conflict since World War One have called this post home, and it has been led by 73 dedicated commanders over the years. The current Senior Vice Commander Christopher Rexrode noted the significance of celebrating this milestone during the pandemic, which has forced far too many Veterans’ clubs across the country to close. He is thankful his post has been able to keep its doors open and continue serving as a place for Veterans to gather, connect, and share experiences and comradery on a daily basis. This week, I enjoyed meeting Veterans at the Post in Harrisonburg, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. I presented the group with a copy of the Congressional Record honoring this achievement and wished them many more years of success in serving our Veterans.



*Photo Credit: WHSV*

### **Visiting Washington:**


As we begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, Washington DC is opening back up. While the White House and U.S. Capitol are still currently closed for tours, many other attractions and museums have reopened on a limited basis. A detailed list of reopenings can be found on my website [here](#). Please do not hesitate to contact my Washington office with travel questions if you plan to visit our Nation's capital.



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

As of July 11, 2021, Virginia has had 682,856 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 11,450. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of July 11th, 5,060,337 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 4,415,707 people are fully vaccinated.





Visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov)  
for more information.

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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