

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

In between community events here in the Sixth District and committee work in Washington, we also took time this week to remember the lives tragically lost 19 years ago on September 11, 2001. We honor their memory by reminding those who wish to do our Nation harm that the United States remains the greatest place in the world in which to live. As President George W. Bush said, "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."

Working to Lower Drug Prices:

The 340B Drug Pricing Program is a federal program that requires drug manufacturers to provide outpatient drugs to eligible health care organizations and covered entities at significantly reduced prices. This program enables covered entities to stretch scarce federal resources as far as possible, reaching more eligible patients and providing more comprehensive services. Unfortunately, in recent weeks, at least five major drug companies have taken action to or have threatened to stop selling drugs at 340B prices to 340B covered entities for use in community-based pharmacies. This is unacceptable, and this week, I joined by colleagues on both sides of the aisle in sending a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services urging Secretary Azar to take immediate

action to stop these companies from either denying or limiting access to 340B pricing to hospitals, health centers, and clinics participating in 340B.

The following are examples of institutions in the Sixth District who participate in the 340B Program: Bath County Community Hospital, Inc., Carilion Medical Center, Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital, Centra Health, Inc, Page Memorial Hospital, and Shenandoah Memorial Hospital.

Feeding Southwest Virginia:

I was a pleased to join Feeding Southwest Virginia in Salem this week as they kicked off Hunger Action Month. This tremendous organization provides more than 100,000 individuals in our area with either groceries or a hot meal each month. Together, the other volunteers and I contributed to their mission by packing hundreds of boxes of shelf-stable foods for those in need. During trying times like this, we must come together as a community to lend a helping hand and aid those who might be struggling.



COVID-19 Update:

As negotiations on an additional large-scale coronavirus aid package remain stalled, Senate Republicans officially introduced an alternative “skinny” bill this week aimed at providing rapid relief to those in need. Unfortunately, Democrats blocked the bill’s passage. The legislation would have provided:

- \$300 per week in supplemental unemployment benefits through December
- \$105 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund, tying two thirds of the money for elementary and secondary education to a requirement that schools reopen to in-person education.
- A provision to allow for a \$600 above-the-line deduction for charitable giving on federal income taxes; \$1200 above-the-line deduction for charitable giving for those filing a joint return.
- \$16 billion for COVID-19 testing
- \$29 billion for the development of COVID-19 vaccine or countermeasures



Operation Warp Speed:

Our Nation’s best scientists, doctors, and manufacturers continue working around the clock through Operation Warp Speed (OWS) to develop safe and effective vaccines and treatments for COVID-19 – the key to restoring our way of life and rebuilding our economy. OWS allows vaccine manufacturers to undertake several steps of the vaccine development process in parallel, mitigating its financial risk without compromising the safety and efficacy of its vaccine. OWS aims to accelerate the timeline and maximize the probability of delivering a vaccine by carefully selecting scientifically sound and promising candidates, building a diverse portfolio of vaccine candidates to mitigate risk of failure, providing unprecedented levels of support for clinical trials, and manufacturing doses of the vaccine candidates while still conducting the clinical trials. To date, the federal government has invested more than \$10 billion into OWS, and the FDA Commissioner continues to emphasize that no matter what, only a safe, effective vaccine will get final approval.



White House Volunteers:

The initial planning for the 2020 Christmas season is underway at the White House and the First Lady's Office is once again seeking volunteers. Please find more information and applications below.

Volunteer Application

Individuals interested in decorating the White House or serving as a greeter at the Holiday Open Houses may apply [HERE](#). The application will close on October 1, 2020. Please note each person must sign-up individually, as no group sign-ups will be accepted. Applicants may outline specific requests and previous, relatable work experience using the online form. Applicants will be notified by October 15, 2020.

Entertainment Application

Musicians – either individuals or groups – may apply [HERE](#) through October 8, 2020. Please note the form allows applicants to select a range of dates during the month of December. All confirmed applicants will be assigned a particular date and time for their performance. Additional requests or requirements may be outlined using the online form. Applicants will be notified by October 22, 2020.



Remembering September 11, 2001:

It is hard to believe that this week marks the nineteenth anniversary of the attacks on New York, Washington, and over the skies of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. In what was meant to send a message by trying to destroy institutions that are uniquely American, those who brought death and destruction saw our Nation rise from the ashes and, despite our differences, unite for the defense of our people and our values.



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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