
News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN
BEN CLINE



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

While Members of the House have been home in their Districts the past few days, it was officially a Committee Work Week and legislative business continued. In a House Budget Committee Hearing recently, my Republican colleagues and I pushed for more fiscal responsibility and expressed opposition to any attempts to do away with congressional control of the debt limit, which is one of the few safeguards against the Left's out-of-control spending. Regardless of the Democrats' actions, I will continue to fight for Sixth District residents. For example, I recently took action to keep more money in older Americans' pockets and also wrote a letter to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives supporting the Second Amendment Rights of law-abiding citizens. It is an honor to serve on behalf of residents in western Virginia, and I look forward to meeting with folks across our region in the upcoming District Work Period.

Budget Hearing:

Since taking office just over a year ago, President Biden and Congressional Democrats have spent more than \$3 trillion on big-government programs, many of which were included in the so-called "American Rescue Plan." This out-of-control spending has led to an economic crisis culminating in the highest rate of inflation in 40 years, the highest gas prices since 2014, and a broken supply chain that has left store shelves bare. Yet, instead of reining in the reckless spending that has led to this situation, this week, Democrats on the House Budget Committee doubled down on their tax-and-spend agenda and held a hearing advocating for the elimination of the debt ceiling. Given the worsening fiscal outlook for the Nation, this plan is outrageous. During the hearing, I expressed my dismay over the Majority's attempt to eliminate one of the few potential ways we can push back against the Left's runaway spending.

Democrats must recognize that we cannot continue to spend in the manner in which they have been if we wish to preserve the long-term viability of our economy.



Russian Aggression:

America stands united alongside our European allies in rejecting Russian aggression against Ukraine. This week, Germany made the correct decision to suspend certification of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and I would urge President Biden to reverse his earlier approval of the project while imposing strong sanctions against the Russian government. Russia's violation of the 2014-15 Minsk agreement and the launching of military action against Ukraine cannot be allowed to stand.

Unfortunately for our allies around the world, the situation we are collectively facing is, in large part, a result of several steps taken by the Biden Administration that have encouraged Russia's bad behavior and helped lead to the escalating tensions at the Ukrainian border. For example, President Biden extended the New Start Treaty, which gave up U.S. leverage to fix structural flaws in the treaty and surrendered our ability to capture all types of Russian nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear weapons and all of their new "exotic" strategic systems. Further, as previously mentioned, this Administration waived U.S. sanctions on the key company behind the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, despite bipartisan opposition. If it were not for recent Germany action, gas would have been permitted to flow through Nord Stream 2, thus undermining Ukraine's security, filling Putin's coffers, and increasing the Kremlin's leverage over Europe's gas supplies. This was in addition to President Biden allowing Russian Cyberattacks against our infrastructure and supply chain to go unabated, undermining our country's threats to respond strongly to antagonistic behavior. Finally, amid rising gas prices in the United States, President Biden begged OPEC and Russia to increase oil production, a request which they denied. This action showed great weakness and highlights our country's reliance on our adversaries overseas. My Republican colleagues and I admonished President Biden for making this request and urged him to bolster American energy sources. That letter can be found [here](#).

Senior Citizens Tax Elimination Act:

Advocating for policies that keep more money in tax-payers' pockets has always been a priority. To that end, I was pleased to recently cosponsor the *Senior Citizens Tax Elimination Act*. This legislation seeks to aid older Americans by eliminating the double-tax on Social Security benefits. These benefits were once exempt from federal income tax, but in 1983, Congress approved recommendations from the National Commission on Social Security Reform to tax the benefits of some higher-income Social Security beneficiaries. However, under current law, the income thresholds for seniors are not adjusted for inflation or wage growth, and over time, an increasing number of beneficiaries will be subjected to the federal income tax on their benefits. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that about half of current Social Security beneficiaries are affected by the taxation of benefits, which is unacceptable. Seniors should not be forced to pay a tax on their benefits when they have already paid them on the

front end. Commonsense solutions like this should be bipartisan, and I will continue to support efforts to lower the tax burden on all Americans.



Defending the Second Amendment:

Whether in Richmond or Washington, I have always been a staunch defender of the Second Amendment. That is why I joined my colleagues in [writing](#) to the Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to express our outrage about a proposed rule that would allow the agency to create a permanent database to track all lawful firearm sales. This rule would essentially serve as a federal gun registry, the creation of which has previously been prohibited by Congressional action. According to documents published at the time, the ATF had already collected [54.7](#) million records in FY 2021 alone. In response to the aforementioned letter, the ATF informed Congress that they were in possession of an estimated 920,664,765 records on firearm transfers. It is an affront to the Second Amendment and the American people that the federal government would maintain such extensive records of law-abiding citizens' firearm transfers. I will continue to fight any attempt to create a Federal gun registry. To read the latest letter I sent to the ATF, click [here](#).



Mask Mandates:

Parents, not government bureaucrats, know what's best for for children. That is why I was pleased to see Governor Youngkin sign SB739 into law making the wearing of masks in school optional. This legislation empowers parents by allowing them to opt-out their children from local school mask mandates and also ensures in-person instruction in schools five days a week. I congratulate the Governor on getting this bill through the General Assembly in short order and applaud those in Richmond who are advocating for our kids. Rest assured that here in

Washington I am fighting for similar policies that combat overreaching Federal mask and vaccine mandates.

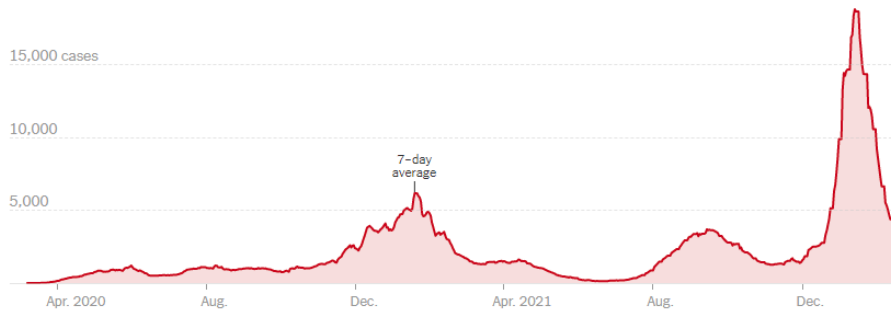
National FFA Week:

National FFA Week is a time to celebrate the National Future Farmers of America's (FFA) role in developing the next generation of agricultural leaders while highlighting the importance of agricultural education. The organization has a rich history as it was originally founded in the heart of Virginia's Sixth District in Weyers Cave, which is why I was pleased to join my colleagues in introducing a resolution recognizing February 19th through the 26th as National FFA Week. I also recently had the privilege of meeting with National FFA Eastern Region Vice President, Mallory White, who represents the Commonwealth. Among other agricultural topics, we discussed the newly formed Congressional FFA Caucus, which I was pleased to join, and I shared my deep appreciation for the organization and the tremendous opportunities that the FFA provides to its members. This recognition is well deserved, and I look forward to the continued success of this organization and its more than 735,000 FFA members across the United States.



COVID-19 Update:

This week in Virginia there was an average of **43.0** daily cases of COVID-19 per every 100,000 residents. This is down from an average of **64.9** cases from one week prior. This week's positivity rate was **16.3%**, down from **20.5%** from last week. For more information, click [here](#).



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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