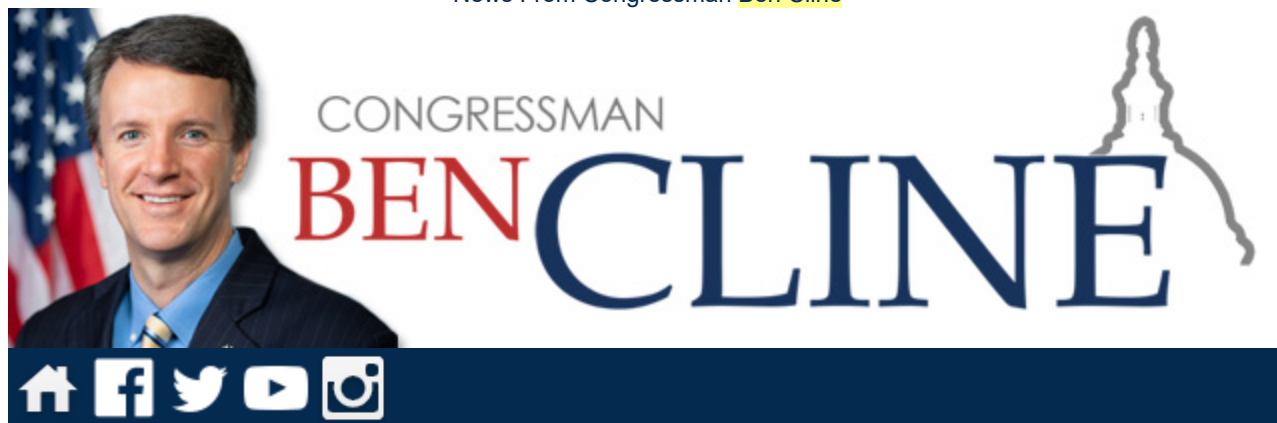


News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives with Congressman Ben Cline

Following the recent violence inside the U.S. Capitol, I was disappointed that Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her Democratic majority ignored our calls to convene the Judiciary Committee and work in a bipartisan manner to fully investigate the deadly riot. Instead, she chose to stoke further division in the country by hastily pursuing two pieces of legislation to remove the President less than a week before he leaves office. As our Nation continues to face unprecedented challenges like the spreading COVID-19 pandemic, I could not support these misguided pieces of legislation. On a brighter note, our Nation celebrated Religious Freedom Day on Saturday, a Day that has at its origins the Statute of Religious Freedom written by Thomas Jefferson.

Invoking the 25th Amendment:

Last week I voted against and spoke in opposition to H. Res 21, *calling on Vice President Pence to invoke Section 4 of the 25th Amendment*. Like all of us, I condemn the violence that occurred at the Capitol last week. Political violence is never the answer, regardless of which side of the political spectrum participates in it, and that is a strongly held position on which I have been clear since well before my time in Congress.

Prior to the vote, the Vice President announced he had no intention of taking action under the Amendment, thus making this nothing more than political theater on the part of the Majority. Further, in the more than 50 years since the 25th Amendment was ratified, Section 4 has never been invoked. As such, there are no judicial or authoritative opinions that would evaluate its implementation, and absent this, I looked to the legislative intent of the Congress that passed its language – which did not support using the Amendment in this manner.



Impeaching the President:

Following the Democrat's failed attempt to invoke the 25th Amendment, the Majority then proceeded to vote to impeach President Trump less than 24 hours after the Article was introduced. By moving so quickly, the President was denied his right to due process and the Congress was denied critical evidence necessary for us to make an informed decision. Additionally, impeaching the President with less than a week left in his term only further fuels the political divide among our citizens and is detrimental to the long-term efforts to unify our country. Also, because Senate rules prevent this Article from coming before the Chamber for trial prior to January 20, there are serious constitutional questions regarding the ability to impeach a President after he leaves office. With that said, both President Trump and President-elect Biden have called for a peaceful transition of power as the Capitol prepares for Inauguration Day on Wednesday, January 20.



National Religious Freedom Day:

This past Saturday, the United States celebrated National Religious Freedom Day, which commemorates the Virginia General Assembly's adoption of Thomas Jefferson's historic *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* on January 16, 1786. This doctrine disestablished the Church of England in the Colony and proclaimed in part, "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities." This statute became the basis of the United States Constitution's First Amendment, which bars the government from making any law hindering the American people's right to freely practice their religion.



Paycheck Protection Program:

The Paycheck Protection Program has supported 51 million jobs across the country, including 71,000 right here in the Sixth District. This past week, the SBA re-opened its PPP portal for small lenders and will re-open to all PPP lenders Tuesday, January 19. I am pleased that this program will continue to serve as a lifeline for small businesses who are hurting as a result of government-mandated shutdowns. To learn more and or apply for a First or Second Draw of PPP funds, click [here](#).



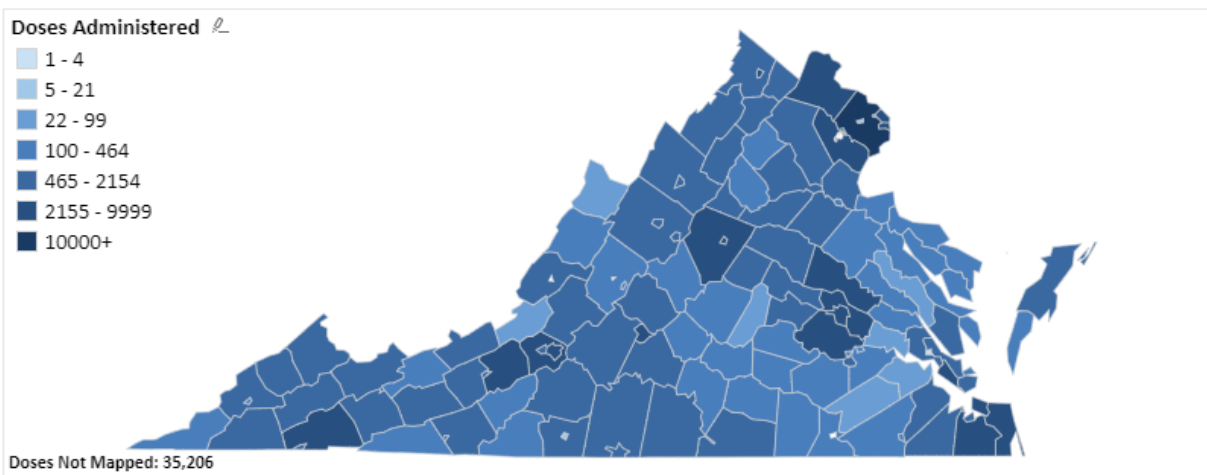
COVID-19 Update:

While most Virginia localities are still focused on Phase 1a vaccinations, which are given to health care personnel and residents of long-term care facilities, 11 [Health Districts](#) moved into Phase 1b, including the Roanoke/Allegany District here in the Sixth Congressional District.

Phase 1b makes vaccines available for essential workers, those 65 years of age and older, younger individuals with certain health conditions, and those living in vulnerable housing populations. It is my hope that the rest of the Commonwealth can move into Phase 1b quickly in the coming weeks. As of now, 193,272 Virginians have received at least one dose of the vaccine, while 22,985 people have been fully vaccinated. Essential workers included in Phase 1b can be found below:

- Police, Fire, and Hazmat
- Corrections and homeless shelter workers
- Childcare/PreK-12 Teachers/Staff
- Food and Agriculture (including Veterinarians)
- Manufacturing
- Grocery store workers
- Public transit workers
- Mail carriers (USPS and private)
- Officials needed to maintain continuity of government

Vaccine Doses Administered by Locality of Residence



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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