

SIXTH DISTRICT PERSPECTIVES WITH CONGRESSMAN BEN CLINE

From Congressman Ben Cline ▾

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

As the House prepares to return to Washington this coming week, I have been reviewing the Democrats' \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 spending package that does little to support actual COVID relief programs (only nine percent of the bill's spending), but instead rewards chronic fiscal mismanagement in cities and states like New York and California. To help us defeat COVID, Congress and the Biden Administration should work to spend funds that have already been allocated and support opening up our schools and our economy. Small businesses are struggling here in Virginia, which is why I also wrote to Governor Northam urging him to support the tax deductibility of PPP funds sent by Congress. Virginia should be helping small businesses, not tacking on extra tax bills when they can least afford them. I also participated in a hearing in the Appropriations Committee on child care programs to discuss how to best help folks who continue to juggle being parents, teachers, and working professionals during COVID. Additionally, I have continued to meet with constituents and advocacy groups to discuss their legislative priorities and ensure that their voices are being heard in Washington. While our region may have experienced some cold weather over the past few days, I am always thankful to be in Virginia's beautiful Sixth District connecting with the folks I am honored to represent.

Advocating for Fiscal Responsibility:

Despite the federal government still having \$1 trillion in unspent COVID funds sitting in its coffers, Democrats are preparing to pass an additional \$1.9 trillion messaging bill. While I could support additional funding to ensure our kids are back in school and our small businesses are back in operation, we should make sure the money we approved last year has been spent before we decide that another dime is needed. Further, if the Majority passes this bloated "aid" package, Congress will have spent \$6 trillion in the last year alone on COVID-related "stimulus". That comes out to more than \$17,000 per individual, \$69,000 per household, and is

larger than the GDP of every country on Earth other than the U.S. and China. This sort of spending is unsustainable and poses a serious threat to the longer-term viability of our economy. Any additional relief must be targeted, temporary, and tied to COVID.



Supporting Small Business:

This week I was joined by Congressmen Wittman and Good in writing to Governor Northam encouraging him and the General Assembly to fully conform state tax law to the federal government's recently enacted tax law to allow for full deductibility of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans in order to ensure the recovery of Virginia small businesses. PPP has served as a lifeline to more than 100,000 Virginia small businesses and their employees since the pandemic began, and as part of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act* passed last year, Congress made its intent clear that that these loans were to be forgiven and fully deductible due to COVID-19. Failing to conform state tax law with that of the federal government would stick those most in need with a sizable tax bill they did not expect and cannot afford. Governor Northam and the General Assembly must now do their part and support mom and pop shops across the Commonwealth. I am confident those serving in Richmond will do the right thing. To read the full letter, click [here](#).



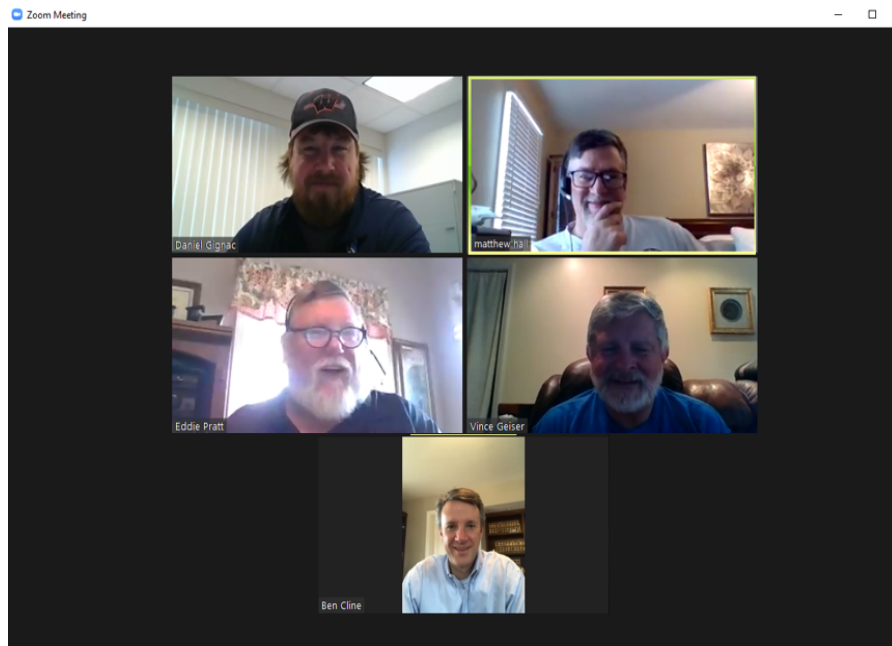
Supporting working Families:

COVID-19 has significantly altered the daily lives of millions of Americans. Families with young children have been stretched thin as they try to juggle being a parent, teacher, and working professional. It is well past time for Congress to step up and provide solutions. The answer in most parents' mind is simple - we must reopen our schools. As I stated in the Appropriations Committee this week, while relief aid is important, we must ensure that funding is going to where it is truly effective. And at this point, the most effective use of taxpayer dollars to alleviate the stress on parents would be allocating resources to get our kids back in the classroom.



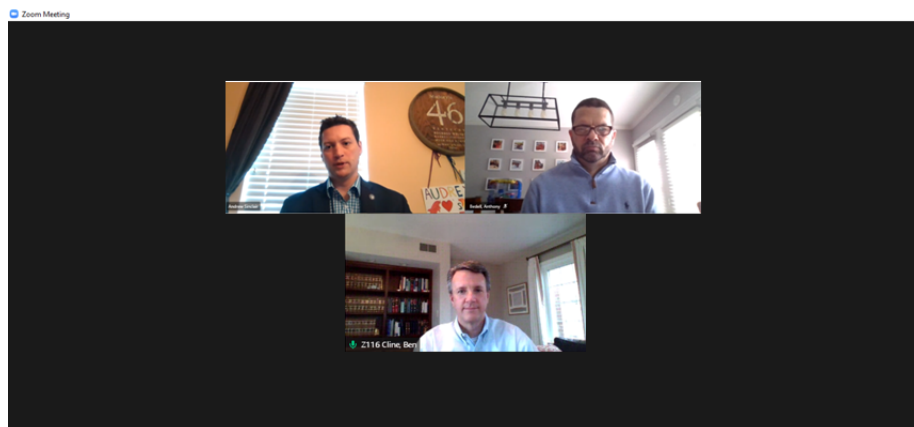
Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council:

The forestry industry brings in nearly \$17 billion to Virginia's economy each year and provides more than \$3 billion in recreational opportunities to nearly two thirds of Commonwealth citizens. Further, the forestry industry contributes \$345 million back to Virginia landowners for selling their timber and employs 103,000 people throughout the Commonwealth. That is why I was pleased to meet recently with members of the Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council to discuss their legislative priorities for the 117th Congress. I will remain an advocate for this vital industry both here at home and in Washington.



Port of Virginia:

The Port of Virginia is the third largest container port on the East Coast and is crucial to the success of various industries. The Port's mission is to deliver, "opportunity by driving business to, and through, the Commonwealth." They certainly deliver on their mission as a recent economic impact study shows that the Port, directly and indirectly, supports 390,000 Virginia jobs generating \$23 billion in annual compensation and \$2.1 billion in state and local taxes. With the Inland Port here in the Sixth District, it was a pleasure to hear from Port officials about how Congress can continue to support their work and ensure they remain a significant economic driver here in the Commonwealth.



COVID-19 Update:

As of February 21, 2021, Virginia has had 564,119 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 7,331. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of February 20th, 1,101,433 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 440,339 people are fully vaccinated.

This week, Virginia announced its launch of a hotline service hoping to streamline the vaccination process throughout the Commonwealth by preregistering those who wish to get the vaccine. The hotline can be reached at 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682), or can be found online at [vaccinate.Virginia.gov](https://vaccinate.virginia.gov).



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 black ink that reads "Ben Cline". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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