
SIXTH DISTRICT PERSPECTIVES WITH CONGRESSMAN BEN CLINE



News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

New cases numbers are declining and vaccination rates are rising, but there are still many across the Sixth District who are hurting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we work to get our kids back in school and our businesses back open, Congress can and should act to provide help to those hit by the one-two punch of the pandemic and the state shutdowns. I have been proud to support several bipartisan bills over the past year that have provided trillions of dollars in aid to families and small businesses during this unprecedented time. Unfortunately, now that Democrats have gained control of the House, the Senate, and the White House, they have abandoned bipartisanship and pushed through a partisan and pork-

laden package designed to payback their supporters like Planned Parenthood and Big Labor. In fact, the \$1.9 trillion bailout package passed at 2AM last Saturday morning spends only 9 cents out of every dollar on actual programs to combat the coronavirus. In addition, only 5% of the \$130 billion in education funding in the bill will help schools reopen this year.

While I am disappointed in Speaker Pelosi's abandonment of the bipartisan spirit that marked previous COVID legislation, I will continue to fight for the people of the Sixth District. This week, I joined a number of Members in introducing the *National Right-to-Work Act*, ensuring that protections against forced unionism that currently benefit Virginians would apply nationwide. No one in America should be required to join a union to get or to keep a job. I also voted against legislation that would have endangered religious liberty and threatened Title IX protections for women in sports. Additionally, I was pleased to connect with tens of thousands of constituents during my eighth telephone town hall, as well as recognize two local high school basketball teams on the House Floor for winning their respective division state championships. It was a busy week in Washington, and as we head back this Monday for another week of legislative business, I am always thankful for the opportunity to serve as your Congressman.

Biden Bailout:

Our families, our farmers, and our small businesses need our continued support as we navigate this COVID pandemic and work to reopen our economy, but they don't need a \$1.9 trillion package riddled with Democrat pork. While I could support additional relief to help get folks back to work and kids back in school, any further aid must be targeted, temporary, and actually tied to COVID. Not only is this legislation riddled with wasteful spending unrelated to COVID and bailouts for blue states like New York and California, but with more than \$1 trillion in previously authorized coronavirus funds still unspent, it is premature. While there could be provisions of this bill that I would support as standalone legislation, H.R. 1319 as a whole is wasteful, partisan, and deeply flawed. For these reasons, I voted no on this bill. A few of the most egregious provisions unrelated to COVID contained in this legislation are listed below:

- \$15 minimum wage hike which was ruled out of order in the Senate and will cost 1.4 million American jobs per the nonpartisan CBO.
- \$350 billion to bailout blue states that have mismanaged their pensions and other programs for years
- \$12 billion in foreign aid
- \$1.5 billion for Amtrak
- \$112 million for an underground rail system in California
- \$50 million in funding for EPA environmental justice grants
- \$10 million in grants to preserve Native American languages
- \$1.5 million for a bridge connecting the U.S. and Canada



National Right-to-Work Act

Every American deserves the right to create their own success from their own volition – free of the requirement that they join an organization solely to hold a job. Simply put, as our Founding Father and fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson said, “To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical.” That is why I joined a number of my colleagues in introducing the *National Right-to-Work Act*. This legislation ensures that no American is forced to join a union to keep a job by erasing automatic-dues clauses in federal statute. Watch the video below.



Equality Act:

I oppose discrimination and have fought to defend our civil rights laws that ensure equal protection under the laws of our Nation. The Democrats' so-called "*Equality Act*," however, would do the exact opposite by discriminating against the religious beliefs of individuals and businesses. It would mandate both public and private schools, churches, hospitals, businesses, and other institutions recognize an individual's chosen "gender identity" instead of their biological sex. This would force female athletes to compete against biological males, weaken our laws that protect against religious discrimination, and compel employers to cover abortions and medical professionals to conduct or assist in performing abortions. This bill forces greater in-equality in the application of the law rather than equality, and I therefore voted no on the measure.



Harrisonburg-Rockingham Telephone Town Hall:

Before the Coronavirus pandemic began, I promised to hold in-person town halls throughout the Sixth District. In fact, since being elected, I have hosted 25 in-person town halls – with at least one being held in each locality throughout our region. I hope to continue those sorts of in-person forums in the future, but for now, as restrictions on public gatherings remain in place, virtual town halls remain one of the best and safest options to connect directly with constituents to ensure their voices are heard in Washington. While my previous seven telephone town halls have been District-wide, this week I hosted a regional forum for residents of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. More geographically targeted events like this moving forward will allow me to focus on the unique issues facing each of our individual communities. I look forward to holding similar events like this throughout the District in the future.

**State Champions:**

It was a great year for high school basketball in the Sixth District with two teams from our area winning state championships this past weekend. I was pleased to take to the House Floor to recognize both Parry McCluer High School's boys basketball team and Luray High School's girls basketball team for winning their respective division state titles. It was undoubtedly a year filled with significant obstacles, but both teams overcame them and brought home trophies to Buena Vista and Luray. Our community is incredibly proud of the hard work and resilience these two teams showed, and we congratulate them on this remarkable accomplishment.



Parry McCluer High School



Luray High School

COVID-19 and Paycheck Protection Program Update:

As of February 28, 2021, Virginia has had 576,050 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 8,552. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of February 27th, 1,266,983 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 666,970 people are fully vaccinated.

This week, changes were made to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which has served as a lifeline to millions of small businesses across the country. From now until March 10, the Small Business Administration will only be accepting PPP applications from businesses with less than 20 employees in an effort to target relief to mom and pop shops in need. The program will reopen to larger businesses beginning March 11. The program is set to expire on March 31 and more than \$10 billion in funding remains available. To apply for a PPP loan, click [here](#).

Further, there was big news on the vaccine front this week as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted emergency approval of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. This is the third vaccine that has been approved by the FDA following Pfizer and Moderna. However, unlike the other two vaccines, Johnson & Johnson's will only require one dose to be effective. Additionally, this vaccine can be stored in a simple refrigerator which should ease any complications with rollout. Johnson & Johnson is prepared to begin distributing nearly 3.9 million vaccines across the country as early as this week. This approval marks a huge step forward in making the COVID-19 vaccine more readily available to the folks across the Commonwealth.



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.

Ben Cline

Washington D.C. Office
2443 Rayburn
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5431

Harrisonburg Office
70 N Mason St
Suite 110
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
Phone: (540) 432-2391

Lynchburg Office
916 Main St
Suite 300
Lynchburg, VA 24504
Phone: (434) 845-8306

Roanoke Office
10 Franklin Rd SE
Suite 510
Roanoke, VA 24011
Phone: (540) 857-2672

Staunton Office
117 S Lewis St
Suite 215
Staunton, VA 24401
Phone: (540) 885-3861

[Unsubscribe](#)