

Sixth District Perspectives with Congressman Ben Cline

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This week in Congress, the House passed legislation ensuring Americans' First Amendment rights; overturning EPA's burdensome WOTUS rule; and, in a moment of bipartisanship, a bill requiring information on the origins of COVID-19. Additionally, it was a week of firsts in Washington as I chaired my first subcommittee hearing on the Biden Administration's compliance to congressional oversight and had the high privilege of serving as Speaker pro tempore of the House of Representatives. Further, President Biden released his \$6.9 trillion budget proposal, which doubles down on more taxes and policies that continue the spiral of financial hardships that hurts families across Virginia. Lastly, I was pleased to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Winchester Rescue Mission on the House Floor, and had the opportunity to meet with constituents and see friendly faces around the Capitol. As House Republicans' work to ensure freedom, transparency, and prosperity continues, I look forward to being back home with those I am fighting for in Congress.

COVID-19 Origin Act

With each passing day, the real role that China and a complicit media played in spreading falsehoods as to the origin and spread of COVID becomes clearer. In an effort to expose the truth, Congress unanimously passed, 419-0, the [COVID-19 Origin Act](#) (H.R. 1376), which requires the Biden Administration to declassify all information relating to potential links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origin of COVID-19. Passing this legislation ensures that Americans are finally going to get the answers they deserve.



Attacking Government Censorship, Restoring Freedom

Far too many times we have seen agencies of the federal government weaponize their power by pressuring social media companies to censor Americans' views online. Government agencies such as the FBI and the State Department have been secretly working with Big Tech to censor conservative views and suppress stories that don't fit their narrative, like the COVID-19 lab leak theory. This week, House Republicans passed the [Protecting Speech from Government Interference Act](#) (H.R. 140), which prohibits federal bureaucrats from colluding with private platforms to silence lawful speech by expanding the Hatch Act, which prevents federal employees from engaging in political activities in their official capacity. Americans have the right to express themselves lawfully online without government suppression.



Protecting Our Farmers, Checking the EPA

Agriculture is the number one industry in Virginia, and the Sixth District is proud to be home to more than 8,000 farms. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working to regulate every pond and puddle, saddling folks with costly red tape. President Biden's rule redefining "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act expands the federal bureaucracy's regulatory power, and broadens the EPA's jurisdiction by failing to define what waters are covered. This new rule is going to negatively impact the vital goods and services that farmers, ranchers, and small businesses provide to the Commonwealth and the Nation. That's why I was proud to vote for, and that the House passed, [H.J. Res. 27](#) to block the Biden EPA's overreaching WOTUS rule, and protect small businesses and farmers from government overreach of power.



Watch my Floor speech speaking out against the EPA's new WOTUS redefinition [here](#)

Oversight in Action

As Chairman of the House Judiciary's Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight, I held my first hearing to try and get to the bottom of why the Department of Justice and Department of Education have ignored hundreds of Judiciary Committee letters requesting information on the agencies' role in targeting parents at school board meetings. During the hearing, I was able to question DOJ and DOE Legislative Affairs officials on the agencies' refusal to comply with requests for documents on their role in the targeting of parents at school board meetings in Virginia and across the country. While I'm pleased the witnesses came before our subcommittee and pledged cooperation, one thing was abundantly clear: we need answers from these agencies, and they better stand ready to come back up to Capitol Hill if they don't provide them.



Watch my questioning DOJ and DOE officials while chairing the Judiciary 'Oversight Subcommittee' [here](#)

Advocating for an Effective USDA

When I speak with farmers up and down the district, they always tell me they want a USDA that assists, not obstructs, their efforts. This week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Inspector General testified before the House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee on recent investigations into wasteful spending at the agency. I spoke about how the SNAP program must operate effectively, and be held accountable to the taxpayers that fund it.





See my Q&A in the Ag Subcommittee [here](#)

The Fight for a Balanced Budget and Prosperous Economy is Just Beginning

Late, bloated, and inflationary, President Biden released his Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal to Congress. The \$6.9 TRILLION tax-and-spend budget would continue the downward economic spiral hard-working Americans have faced over the last two years. Instead of addressing our unsustainable \$31.5 trillion debt and soaring deficits, Biden's budget is more of the same: more taxes, more costly regulations, and more inflationary spending. In the coming weeks, House Republicans will put forward a budget that actually works toward getting our fiscal house in order by reining in out-of-control spending and putting us on a path to balance.

1. Saddles more than a million small businesses with higher tax rates, higher payroll taxes, and ends the small business deduction.
2. Requests \$2 billion to "increase regulation of the firearms industry"
3. Cuts \$600 million from the Department of Homeland Security, while there is a raging crisis at the nation's southern border
4. Proposes \$512 million for the Title X Family Planning program which provides money for abortion services
5. Requests \$3 billion to advance gender equity and equality across a broad range of sectors"
6. Requests nearly \$5 billion to "address the climate crisis
7. Requests over \$3 billion to "more than quadruple international climate finance"
8. Calls for \$100 million at the Department of Education in grant funding for communities "to promote racial and socioeconomic diversity in their schools"
9. Includes \$15 million "to achieve the President's clean energy goals"
10. Calls for \$20 million Corps to "address the climate crisis by creating service opportunities"

BUDGET

The Winchester Rescue Mission

I was pleased to recognize the Winchester Rescue Mission on celebrating 50 years of caring for the homeless in our community. In 1973, Morris Whitaker took out a \$20,000 loan and bought a building to convert it into a homeless shelter for men, and the Rescue Mission was born. Over a decade later, the Rescue Mission extensively expanded its operations to help more people in need, adding a commercial kitchen and increasing the number of beds. Today, the organization provides shelter for both men and women, and will offer even more services to help local residents without permanent housing get back on their feet. I was glad to recognize the Winchester Rescue Mission on the House Floor for its 50th anniversary, and wish the organization another 50 years of success.



[Celebrating the Winchester Rescue Mission on the House Floor](#)

Presiding Over the House of Representatives

 **Congressman Ben Cline** 
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This afternoon, I was honored to preside over the U.S. House floor as the Speaker pro tempore.



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Constituent Meetings



It was great meeting with representatives of New Horizons Healthcare, who advocated for critical community health centers.



Enjoyed meeting with a representative of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).



It was great meeting with National Hemophilia Foundation representatives and hearing how Congress can offer support for their members.

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 Clive