

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

For nearly two weeks Israel had been bombarded by rockets launched from the Iranian-funded terror group, Hamas. However, I am hopeful that the currently negotiated cease-fire holds giving the region much-needed peace. In a potential victory for life, the Supreme Court agreed to review *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* in their coming fall session, which will decide the authority of a state to prohibit abortion after 15 weeks. Legislatively, last week was productive as I joined my Democrat and Republican colleagues in introducing bills to protect consumers and expand rural access to broadband respectively. I also had the opportunity to recognize the athletic accomplishments of two high school teams from the Staunton-Augusta area. As the House heads into Committee and District Work Weeks, I am looking forward to getting home and spending time in Virginia's Beautiful Sixth District.

Defending Life:

Last week, I was pleased that the Supreme Court agreed to review *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* in their coming fall session. In 2018, the Mississippi Legislature passed the *Mississippi Gestational Age Act*, a law that prohibited doctors from performing abortions after 15 weeks of gestation except in medical emergencies or in case of severe fetal abnormality. Unsurprisingly, pro-abortion groups challenged the law in federal court. By reviewing this case, the Supreme Court has the opportunity to Stand for Life and ensure protections for the unborn.

WE MUST stand for life



Standing with Israel:

When I visited Israel, I saw firsthand the proximity of the danger Israelis face on a daily basis. With the Gaza Strip controlled by the Iranian-funded terror group, Hamas, rockets are always pointing at the Jewish State – and it is estimated that the militant group has more than 30,000 rockets and mortars at their disposal. And for the past two weeks, Israel and its people had been bombarded by more than 3,000 rockets launched from within Gaza. Fortunately, the Iron Dome, a defense system which the United States has helped fund, saved countless lives by intercepting thousands of enemy rockets. While some attempt to draw a moral parallel between Hamas and Israel, there is simply no comparison to be made. As Prime Minister Netanyahu said, “you cannot equate a democracy that values life, with a terror organization that glorifies death.” While I am thankful that there now is a negotiated truce in the region, Israel retains the right to defend itself from further attacks. I pray for peace and stability in the region.



Expanding Access to Broadband:

Despite numerous Federal and State-level efforts to deploy broadband infrastructure, at least 19 million Americans remain without access to any form of reliable broadband service. An overly burdensome regulatory environment and the risks of deploying broadband service to higher-cost areas have only exacerbated the challenges for providers and communities. It is crucial we create more opportunities for providers to expand America’s broadband infrastructure and ensure every American has access to these important services. That is why I joined my colleagues in introducing the *Gigabit Opportunity (GO) Act* in order to encourage the expansion of broadband service into these long-neglected, primarily rural, areas. The *GO Act* will provide tax incentives to encourage providers to invest in broadband infrastructure in Gigabit Opportunity Zones. Under the *GO Act*, the FCC will provide guidance to States on how to designate Gigabit Opportunity Zones, with requirements that zones include low-income rural and urban areas that currently lack broadband service at minimal speeds. The *GO Act* seeks to cut red tape and encourage private investment to bridge the digital divide and help ensure that communities like ours have access to this important service.



Protecting Consumers:

Additionally this week, I joined the House Judiciary Committee Chairman in introducing the *Stopping Harmful Offers on Platforms by Screening Against Fakes in E-Commerce (SHOP SAFE) Act* to stop the online sale of dangerous counterfeits. As online retailers continue to grow and increasingly work with unverified third-party vendors, Congress must take steps to protect American consumers from both physical and financial harm. This bill will help ensure consumers get the product they paid for and protect them by curbing the flow of counterfeit products, many of which come from China. It would also aid in dismantling revenue sources for terror organizations who rely in part on the sale of fake goods to fund their operations. The text of the bill can be found [here](#). Specifically, the legislation would:

- Establish trademark liability for companies who sell counterfeits that pose a risk to consumer health and safety.
- Require online platforms to establish best practices to vet sellers to ensure their legitimacy, remove counterfeit listings, and remove sellers who repeatedly sell counterfeits.
- Call for online marketplaces to take steps necessary to prevent the continued sale of counterfeits by the third-party seller or face contributory liability for their actions.

Honoring A Local Veteran:

Last week I took to the House Floor to honor the life and legacy of Roanoke native and World War II Navy veteran, Suttie Economy, who passed away earlier this month at the age of 95. While Economy was proud of his service and the time he spent on the USS English in the South Pacific, he never forgot his fellow Veterans who didn't make it home. Economy made it his life's mission to honor the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who gave their lives for the cause of American freedom. Known for his efforts to maintain the Roanoke War Memorial, driving around town in his red, white, and blue Yugo, and handing out Juicy Fruit gum, Economy made an impression wherever he went. In 2008, he said one of his proudest moments was having marble flower vases added to the Star City's War Memorial and urged folks to, "never forget those Veterans." His daughter said his work was never about him, but rather it was always about the Veterans who served and gave their lives. With traffic stopped, a police officer standing at attention, and members of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association serving as pallbearers, Economy was laid to rest with the respect he deserved. I wish Suttie Fair Winds and Following Seas.



State Champions:

Author and avid golf fan, P.G. Wodenhouse once remarked, “Golf... is the infallible test. The man who can go into a patch of rough alone, with the knowledge that only God is watching him, and play his ball where it lies, is the man who will serve you faithfully and well.” Fittingly, last week, I recognized Grace Christian School of Staunton whose golf team won its first Virginia Association of Christian Athletics state championship. The Warriors shot an 18-hole total of 355 in the championship tournament at the Club at Ironwood to overcome its closest competitor by 32 strokes. Caleb Maas led the Warriors with an impressive 86, while Preston Fitzgerald and Maddie Helmick each shot a pair of 87s, with Isaiah Farlow carding a 95. Maas, Fitzgerald, and Helmick were also named to the all-state team for their performances throughout the season. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet these student-athletes this week, and present them with a copy of the Congressional Record honoring their accomplishment.



I was also pleased to present a copy of the Congressional Record to the Athletics staff of Riverheads High School in Augusta County. Two weeks ago, I recognized the Gladiators' football team on the House Floor for winning their fifth consecutive state championship.

Athletics play an important role in the development of children, and I always enjoy highlighting the accomplishments of students to further instill in them the value of handwork.



COVID-19 Update:

As of May 23, 2021, Virginia has had 673,028 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 11,106. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of May 23rd, 4,521,093 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 3,610,884 people are fully vaccinated.



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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