

News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN  
**BEN CLINE**



## **Sixth District Perspectives** *with Congressman Ben Cline*

Being home the last two weeks has allowed me to sit down with folks across the Sixth District and hear their thoughts and concerns, as well as to discuss several legislative priorities Congress is expected to address when we return to Washington, including the bloated infrastructure package recently passed in the Senate. This week we have also seen the consequences of the Biden Administration's haphazard plan to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan. After more than 20 years in the region and many wounded or killed, the Taliban have retaken the country in a matter of weeks. I also wrote to the Biden Administration demanding answers regarding the placement of COVID-positive illegal immigrants into our communities. Further, I wrote to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure rural Veterans in regions like ours have access to the health care they have earned. It's an honor to represent the Sixth District in Congress, and I look forward to meeting even more constituents as I continue to travel across the District.

### **Afghan Crisis:**

The haphazard withdrawal of American troops has led to a diplomatic and humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan. As the Taliban have now taken Kabul and the flag over our Embassy has been lowered, refugees are pouring into neighboring countries adding to the instability of the region. The President owes the country an explanation as to the failure to ensure peace and the safety of those who aided the war effort. The American people deserve a plan that preserves the human rights gains made for Afghan citizens and makes certain the sacrifices of those killed and wounded was not in vain. Congress must immediately open an investigation

into how this catastrophe occurred and how we hold those responsible to account for the tragic events that are unfolding as a result.

### **Deficit Spending:**

There is near-unanimous agreement that there is a need to fix our Nation's roads and bridges that make up traditional infrastructure projects. That is why it is so frustrating that the Senate passed a \$1.2 trillion "infrastructure" package which allocates only 10 percent, about \$110 billion, toward fixing roads and bridges. The rest of the money will be used to fund the Left's partisan agenda:

- Pushes Democrats' social justice mission: The term "equity" is included 64 times
- Favors people who live in blue cities: Electric vehicle owners, will get \$15 billion in the form of infrastructure for their electric, zero-emission and low-emission plug-in vehicles.
- Will add \$256 billion to the deficit per the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office
- Allocates billions of dollars toward Green New Deal initiatives
- Funding for 'Pollinator-Friendly Practices' on Roadsides - The bill would allocate \$2 million annually for "a program to provide grants to eligible entities to carry out activities to benefit pollinators on roadsides and highway rights-of-way, including the planting and seeding of native, locally-appropriate grasses and wildflowers, including milkweed."
- \$500 million grant for the Healthy Streets Program to allow cities to "provide funding to deploy cool and porous pavements and expand tree cover to mitigate urban heat islands"

To make matters worse, Speaker Pelosi is advocating that this bill be paired with a massive \$3.5 trillion "human infrastructure" bill - which in reality reads more like a decades-long wish list authored by Bernie Sanders and the liberal left. With inflation at a 13-year high and real hourly wages falling 2.7 percent last quarter, we cannot afford this level of deficit spending. As Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) said in regard to this legislation, "Adding trillions of dollars more to nearly \$29 trillion of national debt, without any consideration of the negative effects on our children and grandchildren, is one of those decisions that has become far too easy in Washington. Given the current state of the economic recovery, it is simply irresponsible to continue spending at levels more suited to respond to a Great Depression or Great Recession – not an economy that is on the verge of overheating."

### **\$3.5 trillion in immediate spending to:**

- ✗ Provide amnesty to illegal immigrants;
- ✗ Eliminate "right to work" protections;
- ✗ Subsidize blue state taxes for the wealthy;
- ✗ Expand government-controlled health care;
- ✗ Banish low-cost traditional electricity;
- ✗ Provide tax breaks to wealthy environmentalists;
- ✗ Extend tax provisions of Biden Bailout Bill;
- ✗ And much, much more.

### **Heath Crisis at the Border:**

The crisis at our southern border is only getting worse. In June, more than 188,829 illegal aliens crossed the border, which is a 21-year high. That marks the fourth straight month with more than 170,000 illegal crossings and is a 141 percent increase from when President Biden assumed office. Not only is this a humanitarian, economic, and national security crisis, but it is a health crisis as well. Just last week, 1,500 COVID-positive illegal aliens were [released into one small town in Texas](#), which is wholly unacceptable. For these reasons, my colleagues and I wrote to the Biden Administration demanding answers regarding where illegal immigrants are being released, COVID protocols, and positivity rates at the border. The letter can be found [here](#).



### Helping Rural Veterans:

Each year close to 200,000 servicemembers transition out of the military into civilian life. While some of these Veterans choose to retire or work near a community with a VA facility, others reside in rural communities. In both cases, the Veteran deserves only the best in timely and quality of VA care. While the VA has done good work recently with the establishment of the VA Office of Rural Health, I was pleased to join my colleague and Navy Veteran, Congressman Ronny Jackson (R-TX), in writing to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dennis McDonough, to urge him to continue this positive momentum and to prioritize and give his personal attention to this important population of rural Veterans. To read a copy of the letter click [here](#).



### Hearing From Constituents:

As the House currently remains in its August District Work Period, I have taken the opportunity to visit with constituents and business owners across the Sixth District. Hearing from those I represent allows me to better understand how the policies enacted in Washington are impacting folks on the ground. I will always remain an advocate for my constituents, and I hope to connect with even more folks in our region in the coming weeks.



*Academy Center of the Arts (Lynchburg)*



*VFP, Inc. (Roanoke)*



*River House Apartment Community (Roanoke)*

**COVID-19 Update:**

As of August 15, 2021, Virginia has had 723,727 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 11,618 . Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of August 15th, 5,318,666 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 4,712,192 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.

*Ben Clive*

**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

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