

News From Congressman Ben Cline



CONGRESSMAN
BEN CLINE



Sixth District Perspectives *with Congressman Ben Cline*

Being back home gives me the chance to catch up with folks and to hear their views on current issues in Washington. Recent topics included the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan and the linking of a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package with an additional \$3.5 trillion “human infrastructure” proposal. Regarding the budget debate, I heard from constituents asking “how can we afford it”, “how is it paid for”, and “does it go for traditional infrastructure such as roads and bridges?” Rest assured, I share those concerns and am asking those questions as Congress returns to Washington, DC to debate and vote on these topics. One other issue that I hear universally is the rise in inflation. Why are we having to pay more for gas, food, and nearly everything else? Additionally, the lack of a comprehensive plan to secure our border continues to have negative effects, and the latest data from Customs and Border Protection shows that the situation is only getting worse as over 212,000 illegal aliens crossed the border last month, marking a 21-year high. Closer to home, my office announced its participation in the Congressional App Challenge, which will allow middle and high schools students from across the District to grow in their computer programming skills. Regarding the tragic events unfolding in Afghanistan, my office remains committed to ensuring the safety of American citizens and those who aided the war effort, in addition to providing recourses to the veterans who have sacrificed while serving in the country. It is an honor to serve on behalf of the Sixth District, and I look forward to meeting with even more constituents as I continue my travels throughout the region.

Tragedy in Afghanistan:

The situation in Afghanistan is tragic. The Biden Administration's disastrous withdrawal has allowed the Taliban to sweep through the country, gain control of the capital, and the group is now in the process of setting up a government. My office remains committed to assisting in the evacuation efforts of American citizens still in the country, as well as Afghan interpreters and others who aided the United States over the past 20 years. I am working hard to obtain information from the State Department and find solutions to the tragic situation. If you have a loved one who is trapped there, urge them to do the following immediately:

U.S. citizens needing assistance to depart Afghanistan should register for any option that might be identified to return to the United States by completing this [Repatriation Assistance Request](#) for each traveler in their group as soon as possible to facilitate travel when the situation permits. Spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens in Afghanistan who are awaiting immigrant visas should also complete this form if they wish to depart. Citizens must complete this form even if they have previously submitted their information to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

We are currently working with State to evacuate individuals and are awaiting further guidance. The situation is fluid, and we are working hard to obtain better information. If you are a resident of VA-06 and you have a loved one who is trying to escape Kabul, please reach out to my District offices located at the bottom of the page. Additional information from the State Department can be found [here](#).

Further, the Veterans who answered the call to serve our Nation – including over the last two decades in Afghanistan – deserve our thanks and respect. They also need to know they are not alone. Listed below are resources available to Veterans, provided through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. For emergency mental health care, you can also go directly to your local VA medical center 24/7 regardless of your discharge status or enrollment in other VA health care.

- [Vet Centers](#): Discuss how you feel with other Veterans in these community-based counseling centers. 70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans. Call 1-877-927-8387 or find one near you.
- [Make the Connection](#): Information, resources, and Veteran to Veteran videos for challenging life events and experiences with mental health issues.
- [RallyPoint](#): Talk to other Veterans online.
- [Center for Women Veterans](#), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Call or text 1-855-829-6636 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 6:30PM ET)
- [VA Caregiver Support Line](#): Call 1-855-260-3274 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 5PM ET)
- [American Red Cross Military and Veteran Caregiver Network - MVCN](#)



Inflation:

President Biden and Congressional Democrats' out-of-control spending caused a key inflation indicator to reach a new record high in July. The Producer Price Inflation (PPI) index rose 7.8% over the last twelve months, which is a record high since the Bureau of Labor Statistics first began calculating the index in November 2010. Further inflation itself has increased every month since Joe Biden became President, and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 5.4% over the last twelve months — marking a 13-year high rate of inflation. This matches the CPI's largest jump since right before the financial crash in August 2008. On top of this, the Employment Cost Index — which measures wages and salaries, along with health, retirement, and other benefits — fell last quarter and is 2% below its pre-pandemic trend, when taking inflation into account. While Americans are making less, they are paying more for just about everything, and President Biden's out-of-control spending is a major part of the reason why.

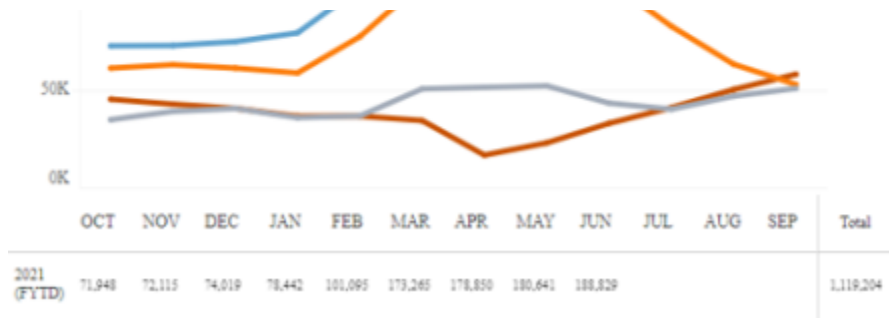
- Car rentals are UP 73.5%
- Gas is UP 41.8%
- Hotels are UP 24.1%
- Airfare is UP 19%
- Steaks are UP 10.7%
- Fish is UP 8.5%
- Sports equipment is UP 7.2%



Crisis at the Border:

Since taking office, President Biden has halted border wall construction, stopped the “Remain in Mexico” policy, canceled asylum cooperative agreements, and requested amnesty for millions. These actions have had disastrous consequences and resulted in a humanitarian, health, and national security crisis at the southern border. Just last month, U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported more than 212,000 border apprehensions, which marks the highest number in 21 years. Further, these numbers make July the fifth straight month in which illegal border crossings have surpassed 170,000, and more than 1 million illegal crossings have occurred since President Biden took office. The illegal immigration crisis is only getting worse, and this Administration must take corrective action immediately.





Congressional App Challenge:

This week, my office was pleased to announce its participation in the 2021 Congressional App Challenge (CAC). The App Challenge is a Congressional initiative to encourage student engagement in STEM programs and, more specifically, computer science. In the ever-evolving technological world, the continued growth of computer science and STEM skills are essential for economic prosperity and innovation. This App Challenge will give middle and high school students from across the Sixth District the chance to test their creativity and grow their programming skills. [Registration is now open for students](#), and more detailed rules and guidelines can be found on the CAC's website. The winning app from each Congressional District will be on display in the Capitol for one year.



Service Academy Day:

My office will be hosting the first of several Service Academy Days on Saturday, August 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Rockbridge County High School in Lexington, VA.

Students and their parents will be provided information on the application, nomination, selection, and appointment processes. Representatives from the various service academies will be present to provide information and answer questions.

- The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York
- The United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland
- The United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York
- The United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado

An academy appointment has an estimated value of over \$400,000 and admission is competitive. Each academy selects nominees based on moral character, scholastic achievement, physical fitness, leadership, and college admission test scores. The earlier a

student begins preparation, the more competitive that student will be in the process.

To register for the event, click [here](#). More information on Service Academy Day and the nomination process may be found by visiting my [website](#) or by calling my Lynchburg office at (434) 845-8306.

Constituent Visits:

As the representative for the Sixth District, I continue to make myself available to those I serve. During this August District Work Period, I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet with individual constituents in my office, tour countless small businesses and manufacturing facilities, and participate in community events.



Molson Coors Beverage Company (Elkton)



COVID-19 Update:

As of August 22, 2021, Virginia has had 731,287 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 11,681. Further, according to the VDH's COVID-19 vaccine data dashboard, as of August 22nd, 5,475,640 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 4,788,915 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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