

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives with Congressman Ben Cline

While the House addressed a number of important issues this week such as the *National Defense Authorization Act* and passed a short-term funding bill to keep the government open, I was disappointed that we did not take up a much-needed targeted COVID-19 relief bill to help individuals and small businesses in need. However, there was exciting news this week on the coronavirus front as the FDA granted Pfizer an emergency use authorization for their vaccine. I was also pleased this week to support legislation promoting research that could have significant medical benefits, as well as advocated for our ally, Israel. And finally, as always, it was a pleasure to meet virtually with constituents and advocacy groups to discuss the issues most important to them. As we head back to Washington next week, know that I will continue fighting for residents of the Sixth District.

COVID-19 Update:

This week the Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization for the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, and doses will be available to folks in the next several days. Despite this great news, Governor Northam has implemented further restrictions on small businesses and infringed on individuals' liberties. He has taken the light at the end of the tunnel that is the vaccine and turned it into a light at the head of a train that is now barreling toward our business community.

Per [WDBJ7](#), the following restrictions will take effect at 12:01 a.m. Monday, December 14:

- **Modified Stay at Home Order:** All individuals in Virginia must remain at their place of residence between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Exceptions include obtaining food and goods, traveling to and from work, and seeking medical attention.
- **Universal mask requirement:** All Virginians aged five and over are required to wear face coverings in indoor settings shared with others and when outdoors within six feet of another person. This order expands the current statewide mask mandate, which has been in place since May 29, and requires all individuals aged five and over to wear face coverings in indoor and outdoor public settings outside of their own household.

- **Reduction in social gatherings:** All social gatherings must be limited to 10 individuals, down from the current cap of 25 people. Social gatherings include, but are not limited to, parties, celebrations, or other social events, regardless of whether they occur indoors or outdoors. This does not apply to religious services, employment settings, or educational settings. Restaurants and retail stores are already governed by strict social distancing requirements and are not included in this limit.



Paycheck Protection Program Update:

Every day across the country workers are losing their jobs and small businesses are being forced to shutter their doors. Instead of taking action and offering a lifeline to these businesses by moving to vote on legislation that would extend the Paycheck Protection Program, Speaker Pelosi has chosen to use these Americans as leverage and has openly admitted it. Forty-one times, Republicans have tried to bring to the Floor [H.R. 8265](#) which would extend the PPP so small businesses in desperate need of relief could access the more than \$138 billion that remains in the program's coffers. Forty-one times, Democrats have said no. This week, the SBA also released a Paycheck Protection Program Myth vs Fact document which can be found [here](#).



National Defense Authorization Act:

While I strongly support our troops and believe they should have every necessary resource to ensure their and our country's safety, I could not support this year's *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA). First and foremost, this legislation committed the United States to continue fighting endless wars by tying the hands of the President, Republican or Democrat, to withdraw troops from theaters around the world. Further, the bill failed to make crucial reforms to the Authorized Use of Military Force and Section 230 of the *Communications Decency Act*. It also created and codified duplicative positions at the Department of Defense, which unnecessarily expanded the federal bureaucracy. And finally, the NDAA as a whole pushed a green new deal environmental agenda - just one such example is requiring the Secretary of Defense to carry out a pilot program on alternative fuel vehicle purchasing. For decades, taking care of our men and women in uniform has been a nonpartisan issue, but sadly, it was not the case this year.



Medical Marijuana Research Act:

As a former member of the Virginia House of Delegates, I sponsored and passed legislation to allow physicians to recommend cannabidiol oil to their patients, create legal dispensaries, and to create an affirmative defense for possession of cannabidiol oil for medicinal use. This is an issue I am open to reform on; however, I could not vote for the *MORE Act* last week which sought to legalize marijuana. With that said, I did support H.R 3797 - the *Medical Marijuana Research Act* this week. There were clear differences between these bills. While the *MORE Act* would have legalized marijuana, H.R. 3797 simply allows researchers the ability to study the medicinal benefits of cannabis, which is essentially prohibited by federal law at this time. Congress must root marijuana policy in science, and passing the *Medical Marijuana Research Act* will allow Congress' decision making to be led by facts moving forward.



Supporting Israel:

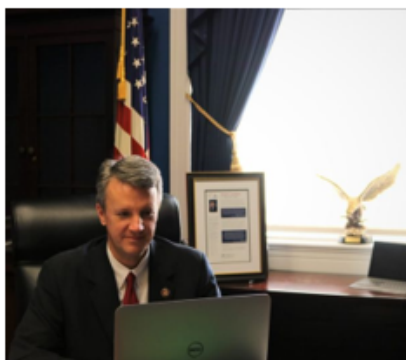
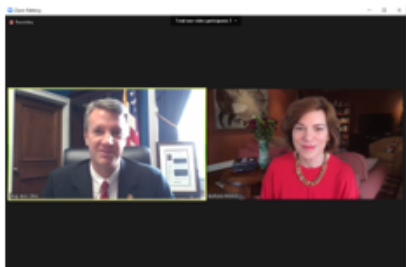
Israel is a vital partner in the United States' fight against terrorism and is a pillar of strength in the Middle East. We must continue to support our closest ally and the only democracy in the

region, and that is why I recently wrote a letter to Congressional leadership urging the denial of any federal funds from being used to relocate our Embassy from Jerusalem. A promise was made, and it should be kept. To read the full letter, click [here](#).



National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities:

Independent Colleges and Universities play a meaningful role in their communities and substantially contribute to local economies. Just right here in the Sixth District, we have 12 such institutions who are not only vital in providing tremendous educational opportunities to students in our region, but also serve as the largest employer in many localities. This week, I was pleased to chat with the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and was honored to be recognized in their “Member Spotlight.” As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, I have been proud to represent the interests of these institutions during my first term in Congress.



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
1009 Longworth
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](#)