

News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives with Congressman Ben Cline

Veterans and the Department of Defense took center stage as Congress passed historic legislation relating to military members exposed to toxic burn pits, relief for the massive backlog of military records, and acted on the National Defense Authorization Act. To address the continued shortage of infant formula, I also supported legislation temporarily suspending the high tariffs on imported formula. Unfortunately, the Democrats pushed through extreme legislation that seeks to codify *Roe* and create a national standard to allow for abortions of unborn children for any reason and at any stage of pregnancy up until birth. Further, overriding existing pro-life state laws, the majority passed legislation that would ban the enforcement of pro-life state laws designed to prevent an individual from the pro-life state from getting an abortion in a pro-abortion state. I stood for life and will always do so in opposing both pieces of pro-abortion legislation. As always, I had the opportunity to welcome Sixth District residents to the Capitol and was pleased to honor the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County on the House Floor. As Congress works through the dog days of summer, I will continue advancing the interests of Western Virginia.

9.1% — 40-Year High Inflation Rate for June

Skyrocketing prices are eating away at family budgets across the country. 8.3%, 8.6%, and now 9.1% — those were the inflation rates for April, May, and June. In the past year, energy prices are up 34.6%, gasoline 48.7%, fuel oil 106.7%, electricity 12%, meat, poultry, and eggs 14.2%. But worse, the House Democrats' answer is to double down on Build Back Better and a tax and spend agenda that raises taxes on local businesses and families. A slow-to-react Federal Reserve and the Democrat Majority's prescription of spending trillions on Green New Deal projects and blue state bailouts have caused paychecks to shrink and have created a lack of faith in our economic future. Inflation is a tax on us all. I am hopeful that this 40-year high is a

wake-up call to return to fiscal sanity for Democrats in Congress and President Biden. Unfortunately, no one needs a crystal ball to predict that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will hit the snooze button on this wake-up call. However, I will continue to fight to rein in spending to drive down inflation, unleash the American economy, and protect the wallets of the American people.



Discussing inflation and the need to stop massive deficit spending on the House Floor

American Troops, Veterans, and NDAA

NDAA

Making sure we have the best trained and equipped military in the world is paramount to ensuring America is prepared for 21st-century warfare and to advancing our interests abroad. While there were numerous provisions in the bill I could support, I could not support the overall package. The bill authorized \$850 billion — \$82 billion more than last year's NDAA — fired healthy, qualified service members because they won't get vaccinated, force-fed our troops woke ideology, and pursued billions in 'green' energy programs. It is my hope that the NDAA will be substantially improved in the Senate and come back to the House for final passage in a form that makes America and our troops safer.

The PACT Act

Throughout American history, but especially in the post-9/11 era, service members and Veterans suffered prolonged exposure to dangerous toxic substances such as from burn pits that destroyed trash, medical and human waste, chemicals, and fuel. Those who were stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan have been particularly affected by this issue. Of the hundreds of thousands of service members who have suffered these exposures, far too many have become sick and passed away once they returned home.

To help address this issue, I was proud to join over 40 Veteran Service Organizations to cosponsor and vote for the bipartisan *Honoring our PACT Act of 2021*. The legislation takes several actions to support the millions of Veterans exposed to toxins while serving our country. Further, a provision I fought for in the bill was included, which will expand the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) workforce by enhancing VA hiring practices and incentives to better recruit and retain health care professionals, and strengthen Veteran access to quality VA health care, especially in rural areas like ours.

Access for Veterans to Records Act of 2022

An issue Sixth District Veterans have consistently brought to my attention is the need to streamline and expedite military records. I was pleased to support and that the House passed the *Access for Veterans to Records Act*, which requires the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to submit a plan to address the backlog of record requests at the National Personnel Records Center to the relevant Congressional committees within 60 days.

Supporting our troops with the needs to fight our Nation's battles when called upon and fighting for those who fought for us continues to be one of my top priorities as your Representative.

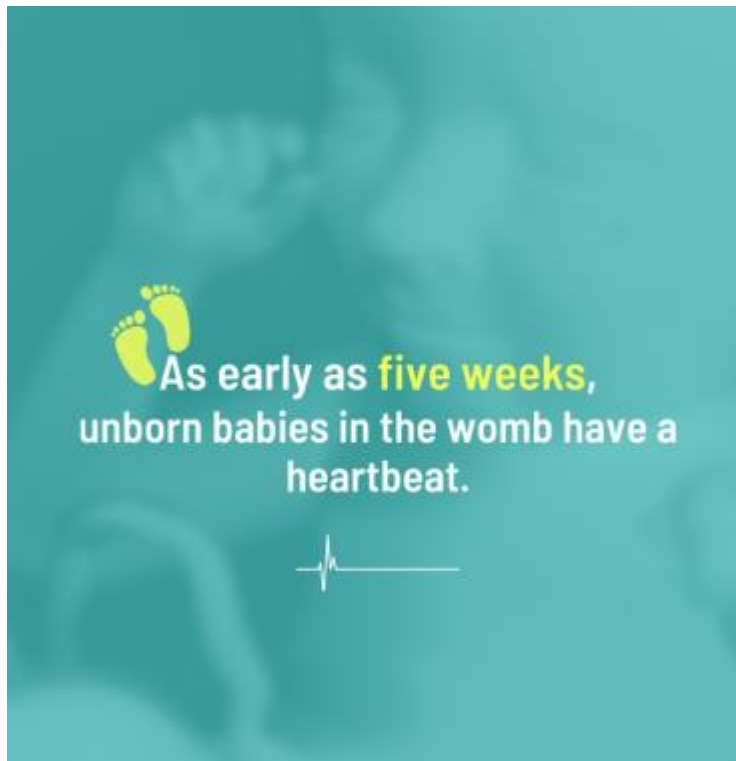


Meeting with a number of Veterans Service Organizations to discuss the PACT Act, including the Military Officers Association of America, the American Legion, the Tragedy Assistance Program For Survivors, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

Women's Health Protection Act and Ensuring Access to Abortion Act

I continue to stand fervently on the side of life as House Democrats continue to seek to counteract the Supreme Court's intent in the *Dobbs* ruling and federalize and expand abortion law across the country. I strongly opposed two radical abortion bills last week. The first, H.R. 8296, would preempt almost all state and federal restrictions on abortions, creating abortion-on-demand across the land, and would overrule the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act*, which used to be supported by and was in fact authored by Democrats in the 1990s, an indication of how radical their pro-abortion stance has become. The second, H.R. 8297, would federally ban the enforcement of pro-life state laws designed to prevent an individual from the pro-life state from getting an abortion in a pro-abortion state.

Instead of following the Court's ruling, Democrats continue to nationalize the fight and impose their pro-abortion agenda on all Americans, and I remain steadfast in opposing their efforts.



Baby Formula

The Biden Administration failed to prepare for the baby formula shortage crisis, which is sadly still ongoing. Because they have failed to take the adequate steps to mitigate the lack of vital nutrients for our infants, Congress has been forced to step up to the plate.

For context, in the first half of 2021, out-of-stock levels of baby formula were normal, hovering at around 10%. In the second week of May, out-of-stock rates reached 43%. Much of this shortage was due to the February 17th recall of baby formula made by Abbot Nutrition. To combat the crisis, controlling inflation and removing government interventions and obstacles to the supply of baby formula are paramount, and I supported legislation to that effect in May. Adding to this effort, this past week, I supported the *Formula Act*, which suspends tariffs on infant formula through December 31, 2022. This will be a critical step in alleviating a crisis the Biden Administration should have been prepared for, but one in which we are all now forced to address.



Source: [NBC News](#)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County

I was pleased to honor on the House Floor the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County for winning the 2022 Quality Award at their national conference. Big Brothers Big Sisters aims to connect mentors, or "bigs," with local youth, known as "littles." The prestigious Quality Award is granted to only a third of the chapters in the country. To achieve it, the chapter must succeed in having 73% of mentors meet with a youth member for a whole year. Additionally, 54% of participants must meet with their "littles" at school for that year. The Harrisonburg-Rockingham chapter knocked that standard out of the water, reporting a 70-80% meeting success rate. According to Lindsay Douglas, the executive director of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham chapter, the reason for the chapter's superb performance is strong communication between the mentors, children, and their parents. It's community organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters that fosters an environment where our youth can thrive. Congratulations again to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham chapter.



Honoring Big Brothers Big Sisters of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County

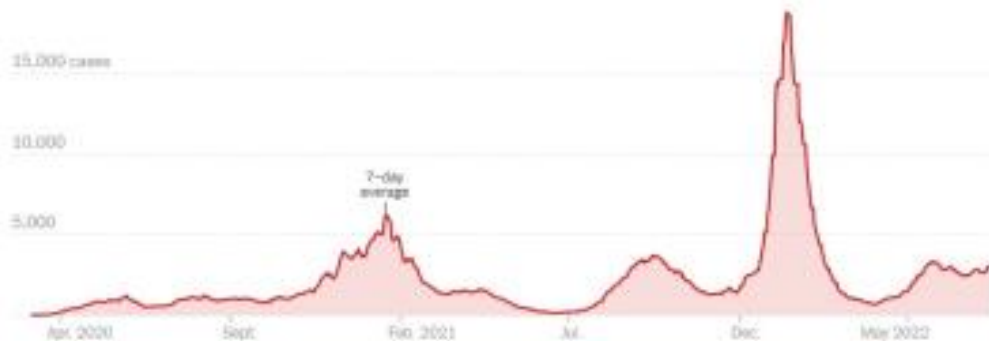
Constituent Meetings



Meeting with members of the Virginia Farm Bureau

COVID-19 Update

Last week in Virginia there was an average 36 daily cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 residents, up from 31 daily cases last week. This week's COVID-19 test positivity rate rose to 23%. For more information, click [here](#).



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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