
News From Congressman Ben Cline



Sixth District Perspectives with Congressman Ben Cline

Above the entrance to the House of Representatives is a sculpture called the "Apotheosis of Democracy." This piece of artwork, sculpted in 1916 by Paul Wayland Bartlett, has at its center the figure of allegorical Peace, who is dressed in armor and is depicted protecting the Genius of America. Last week, that peace was tragically disturbed as our U.S. Capitol was invaded for the first time since the War of 1812. A violent mob, including many with hostile intentions, broke past security barriers and unleashed destruction and chaos throughout the Capitol complex. When it was over, five individuals were dead, including a Capitol Police officer and an Air Force veteran from San Diego, California. While I have always supported the right of citizens to peaceably assemble, those who breached the Capitol and assaulted Capitol Police officers should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.



Remembering Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick

Elizabeth and I were heartbroken to learn of the passing of Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick, who sustained a fatal injury while engaging rioters at the Capitol last week. Officer Sicknick grew up in New Jersey, and he enlisted in the National Guard in 1997. He deployed to Saudi Arabia and Kyrgyzstan, and he joined the Capitol Police in 2008. He cared for rescued Dachshunds in his spare time and cheered for the New Jersey Devils hockey team. Our Nation mourns the loss of Officer Sicknick, who gave his life in defense of the People's House.



Condemning Political Violence:

As we continue to mourn the loss of life at the U.S. Capitol, I hope all of us across the ideological spectrum would come together to condemn all forms of political violence, rather than just condemning the violence on one side or the other. Whether I was Tweeting against the violence in Charlottesville, denouncing the BLM/ANTIFA riots this summer, or condemning the mob this week that entered the U.S. Capitol, I have been consistent in my position that violence is not the answer. I hope everyone, regardless of his or her political background, will reject violence and support civil dialogue so that we can more effectively address the pressing issues facing our Nation. Whether in Richmond, or in Washington, that is how I have always approached my job as your representative, and it's my pledge to you as we continue to move forward during this challenging time.

Electoral College:

Reports indicate that some of the individuals who broke into the Capitol were seeking to disrupt the counting of Electoral College votes cast on December 14. If true, these individuals were engaged in, and should be prosecuted for, insurrection against the government of the United States. The Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution states that "The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted." A separate statute, the *Electoral Count Act of 1887*, mandates that the count occurs on January 6 at 1:00 PM. The Capitol was closed to the public due to the coronavirus, but as the count was taking place, invaders broke windows and forced open doors. While they did temporarily delay the count, Congress reconvened later that night to finish the count and perform its duty as required under the Constitution. Ultimately, Joseph Biden's election by the Electoral College on December 14 was confirmed by Vice-President Mike Pence, and he will be inaugurated as President next week on January 20, 2021. President Trump has said he is working toward a smooth transition to the new administration, and I am committed to working with President-elect Biden on potential areas of agreement in the upcoming 117th Congress.

Swearing In:

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve the residents of Virginia's Sixth District in Congress, and I was honored to be sworn in to a second term last week. When I took office in January of 2019, my staff and I hit the ground running not only pursuing legislative initiatives that would benefit area residents, but also in assisting folks deal with federal agencies to ensure they received the federal benefits they have earned. Over the course of these past two years, I have been blessed with the opportunity to connect with hundreds of thousands of constituents and visit with so many of the groups and places that make our region special. As we begin the 117th Congress, know that I will continue to advocate for conservative values like defending the Constitution, promoting fiscal responsibility, protecting the sanctity of life, defending the Second Amendment, securing our borders, and lifting regulatory burdens on businesses and farmers.

COVID-19 Update:

While I am pleased that several COVID-19 vaccines are being distributed across the country, I have been very disappointed in Virginia's distribution plan and slow roll out across the Commonwealth. According to the CDC, Virginia's current vaccination rate of 23% is the fifth worst in the country, trailing only behind Kansas, Georgia, Arizona and Louisiana. This is unacceptable, and changes must be made. With 8.5 million people in the Commonwealth, I hope Governor Ralph Northam can at the very least meet his goal of distributing 25,000 vaccines a week, rather than the 14,000 currently being allocated. With the new appointment of Dr. Danny TK Avula, Director of the Richmond and Henrico health districts, to lead the vaccination effort in Virginia, I am hopeful that distribution of this important vaccine can get on track.



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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