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Weekly Wrap-Up with Congressman Byron Donalds February 20, 2024

Last week my office was hard at work on Capitol Hill holding the radicals in the Biden administration accountable and delivering upon meaningful legislative solutions on behalf of our Southwest Florida community, the State of Florida, and the American people.

The Air Traffic Control Tower at Page Field in Fort Myers has been subcontracted out by the FAA—even though, due to expanded aviation activities, such contractual action would not occur today. Simply put, the Tower's infrastructure and technology are outdated, and the Tower needs to be modernized and rebuilt. Constituents and stakeholders from across our community have expressed concern regarding the antiquated Air Traffic Control Tower at Page Field in Fort Myers. Consequently, I sent a letter to the FAA seeking answers. Specifically I asked about the FAA's priority-level for Tower modernization, FAA oversight procedure for subcontracted towers, the likelihood of a future safety-related incident and the effect recent field events had on aviation activities

The disastrous results of Bidenomics were also on full display. January CPI numbers revealed that inflation rose 3.1% in January, meaning inflation is up 17.9% since Joe Biden took office. One in eight retirees are even rejoining the workforce due to the dire economic impact of Biden's policies. Some of the largest inflationary increases this January included: frozen drinks up 29%, car insurance up 20.6%, house repairs up 18.2%, sports tickets up 13.5% steak up 10.6%, vending machines/food trucks up 10.6%, veterinarian services up 9.6%, nonprescription medicine up 9.2%, baby food up 8.7%, financial services up 8.3%, car repairs up 7.9%, hotdogs up 7.1%, hospital services up 6.7%, takeout up 5.1%.

The crisis on our borders also further devolved. The Swanton Sector which includes the Canadian border with New York, Vermont and New Hampshire is experiencing a historic surge. Note that 85% of terrorists who entered our country last year came through the Northern border. In New York City, Venezuelan "Tren De Aragua" gang members are exploiting Biden's open border and creating a "combat zone" atmosphere for members of the New York National Guard who are trying to keep the peace. Illegal aliens at a taxpayer funded holding facility in New York City were also filmed beating NYPD officers. California is experiencing the worst surge in the nation and the San Diego Sector is recording historic numbers. Overall, since October 1, 20,000+ Chinese illegal aliens have entered our country and more have entered our country in the past three days than in all of FY'21.

On March 1, government funding will run out. The American people are saying, "What about us?" If Joe Biden wanted to be president for all Americans, he would've secured the border years ago. Instead, he only serves his radical base. We must take care of business at home first. Don't blame us for putting Americans first. The issue at the border is not money. The issue at the border is policy. Biden will not reverse course on his open border policies so it is imperative that funding is withheld until he does. If you're derelict in your duty to secure the nation, why do you deserve funding? This premise applies to all aspects of life.

As your Congressman, you have my commitment to work on your behalf and restore order and proper governance to The People's House.

Legislative Updates

ICYMI: "Petty Legislation Is Crypto's Greatest Enemy"

WASHINGTON – Congressman Byron Donalds (R-FL) published the following op-ed entitled, *"Petty Legislation Is Crypto's Greatest Enemy."* The Blockworks op-ed details the threat of newly proposed legislation that could crush any incentive for the creation of free market crypto advancements.

Read the full op-ed here or below:

Petty Legislation Is Crypto's Greatest Enemy
Congressman Byron Donalds (R-FL)
Blockworks – February 19, 2024

As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, I've planted my stake in the ground to support access to capital. I want to ensure that government overreach is deterred, especially when it comes to advancing the digital asset marketplace.

The House Financial Services and House Agriculture Committees took a major step forward for the digital asset community with the passage of the Financial Innovation and Technology for the 21st Century Act, or FIT, back in July 2023. The bill sets out the first comprehensive regulatory framework for the ecosystem and reigns in the rogue agencies seeking to decapitate the budding industry.

Unfortunately, the Upper Chamber — with the help of both Democrats and Republicans — is working overtime to buck the actions of the House in favor of policies to eliminate their decentralized competition. Look no further than Senator Warren, D-Mass'., Digital Asset Anti-Money Laundering Act, and Senator Reed, D-RI's Crypto Asset National Security Enhancement and Enforcement Act (CANSEE Act).

Under the ruse of "national security," Senator Warren's bill purports to combat illicit finance by extending the burdensome regulations found in existing laws like the Bank Secrecy Act and know-your-customer (KYC) requirements to wallet providers, miners, validators and virtually every participant of the blockchain community. Just as troubling, Warren's bill also mandates that banks and money service businesses track the identities of and maintain records for those using and developing "unhosted" wallets, even though they are simply self-storage devices.

These bureaucratic constraints are impractical and strike at the foundation of our Constitutional Republic and the American people's privacy rights.

Now, I'm keenly aware of what the critics will say, and to set the record clear — I nor anyone who agrees with my stance — is in favor of illegal financial activity. Parallel to that self-evident fact is the genuine concern of many like me, those who have issues with lawmakers creating politics that will intentionally destroy the next generation of financial technology.

More granularly, there are millions of daily transactions in mere seconds on blockchain networks — applying KYC disclosures aggregate of the blockchain network is asinine and unworkable. Could you imagine if this same misguided approach was implemented in the early days of the internet? We'd be stuck in a technological dark age, drowning in seas of regulation and red tape.

Like many in the crypto community, I'm increasingly concerned about the ambitions of people like that senior senator from Massachusetts, who has made her intentions to usher in disastrous, warrantless federal surveillance and altogether dismantle domestic decentralized finance quite clear.

By deputizing banks and money service businesses, the Digital Asset Anti-Money Laundering Act creates a backdoor to blockchain networks, allowing direct access to individuals' transactions. Lacking true anonymity, permissionless-ness and decentralization, the fundamental benefits of blockchain technology will become much more limited, and the likelihood of mainstream adoption in the US will dwindle.

Whether they share Senator Warren's anti-crypto motives or not, 19 additional senators have agreed to support her bid to end financial privacy. It also appears that Senator Warren's efforts have inspired four other senators to join her endeavor to destroy domestic financial innovation, this time through the CANSEE Act. This measure — introduced by another New England Democrat, Jack Reed, D-RI, — has the support of Virginia's Senator Warner, D-VA, and two members of my party, South Dakota's Senator Rounds, R-SD, and Utah's Senator Romney, R-UT.

The CANSEE Act is even more troubling, as it would make DeFi project developers subject to criminal liability via the Bank Secrecy Act. We have Senator Reed on the record lauding the fact that his bill would make anyone who "controls" a DeFi project criminally responsible if a third party — who is subject to US sanctions — uses the platform. The text of Reed's bill goes even further by defining "control" as anyone with "the power, directly or indirectly, to instruct change in the computer code or other terms governing the operation of the protocol, as determined by the Department of the Treasury." The bill text also adds that such power may be exercised through ownership of governance tokens, administrator privileges, the ability to alter or upgrade computer code or otherwise.

Even more absurd is what happens if the Treasury Security can't determine who controls the DeFi project. Then, according to Senator Reed, anyone who invests too much money in the project will be subject to potential criminal penalties instead "as a backstop."

Setting aside the impracticability of the bill text itself and the attempt to shoehorn new financial technology into an incompatible regulatory model, the efforts to criminalize innovation are deeply concerning.

Those tracking the legislative sausage-making related to the crypto community should watch the Chair of the Senate Banking Committee, Senator Sherrod Brown, D-OH., as he seems increasingly friendly to these radical proposals under the guise of money laundering and illicit finance policy. Whether intentional or not, it's clear that the adoption of these pieces of legislation will crush any incentive for the free market to create new advancements. By effectively sidelining its competition and outlawing the development of alternatives, the federal government's implementation of a central bank digital currency (and all of the privacy and government outreach concerns along with it) becomes more inevitable.

While the current Republican majority remains determined to block these bills from advancing in the House of Representatives, the fight is far from over. Americans everywhere must remain vigilant against government tyranny in all of its forms and all of its disguises.

ICYMI: "An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership"

WASHINGTON – Representatives Byron Donalds (R-FL) and Chuck Fleischmann (R- TN) published the following op-ed entitled, *"An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership."* The op-ed headlines the rollout of the Washington Examiner's "Restoring America's Energy Dominance" series.

Read the full op-ed here or below:

An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership
U.S. Representatives Byron Donalds (R-FL) and Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)
Washington Examiner – Restoring America – February 12, 2024

On Dec. 8, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave his historic "Atoms for Peace" speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. Eisenhower's stirring address set the stage for the civil nuclear energy industry in America and abroad. His subsequent "Atoms for Peace" program prepared America for global civil nuclear success — and today, we must realize that vision once again. Civil nuclear energy has many benefits, first and foremost as a reliable, carbon-free source of electricity. Since high-quality energy is a necessary condition for economic growth, American nuclear technology has the potential to bolster economic development and raise the standard of living around the world. Nuclear reactors can also be used for desalination, district heating, hydrogen production, isotope manufacturing, space exploration, chemical production, sustainable fuel creation, and more.

The global market is ripe for nuclear technology, and competition for international civil nuclear leadership is strong. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, up to 70 reactor designs are currently being developed and built in 17 countries around the world — with two-thirds being Russian and Chinese designs. Simply put, this is concerning. Russia plans on powering half of its country via nuclear energy by 2050, and China has active plans to build 150 Chinese nuclear reactors over the next 15 years. China also estimates that it can build as many as 30 nuclear reactors overseas by 2030. It's also important to recognize that Russia currently dominates the global market for enriched uranium — a vital necessity to fuel nuclear reactors.

Let us emphasize: it is in the best interest of the United States and the rest of the world for our country, instead of China and Russia, to be the preferred partner for embarking nuclear nations. In that role, we can influence responsible protocols and regulations that govern nuclear safety, security, and safeguards.

Unleashing America's true nuclear export potential and advancing new nuclear capacity domestically also benefits the United States economically. An essential component of our nation's prosperity has been and must remain abundant, affordable, and reliable energy. The U.S. Department of Commerce has predicted an approximate $740 billion international market opportunity for American nuclear equipment and services over the next 10 years. Other experts suggest that the global market for nuclear power could triple by 2050 — especially with the recent declaration signed by 25 countries to triple nuclear power by 2050. Plus, every $1 billion worth of U.S. nuclear exports could support up to 10,000 American jobs.

Deliberate and meaningful action is needed to capitalize on the promising global nuclear renaissance. Specifically, the Department of Energy funding bill that was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year included strong support for (1) developing new nuclear reactor technologies, (2) improving the efficiency and safety of nuclear fuel, and (3) reestablishing our great nation's domestic uranium enrichment capability. The bill also acknowledged the unsustainable trajectory of our national debt, however, by reprioritizing previously provided funding for much of this work — rather than providing all new funding. As staunch fiscal conservatives, we will continue to fight for fiscal discipline in Congress while simultaneously promoting sound policies to stimulate economic growth.

Policy and process improvements can be just as important as federal funding. For example, Congress has initiated important first steps with financial institutions, including the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the Export-Import Bank of the United States, to develop the necessary nuclear expertise for assessing and overseeing the deployment of American nuclear technology with embarking nuclear nations around the world. We have also supported a variety of efforts to streamline pesky government regulations, and advocated the use of advanced computing, simulation, and modeling techniques to spur innovative advanced reactor deployment.

All in all, maximizing American ingenuity and establishing crucial international relationships will be key to capturing the current nuclear economic opportunity worldwide. This task will be difficult — and time is of the essence, especially since our adversaries have a head start — but American global nuclear leadership is achievable. Consistent with the foundational principles established by Eisenhower in 1953, the United States can and will once again be the world leader in nuclear power.

Donalds Probes The Federal Aviation Administration Regarding Operational Concerns At Page Field

WASHINGTON – Congressman Byron Donalds (R-FL) sent a letter to Administrator Michael Whitaker of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), seeking answers relating to the operation and modernization of the Air Traffic Control Tower at Page Field in Fort Myers.

The Tower at Page Field has been subcontracted out by the FAA—even though, due to expanded aviation activities, such contractual action would not occur today. Simply put, the Tower's infrastructure and technology are outdated, and the Tower needs to be modernized and rebuilt.

- WINK News Print Exclusive – "U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds calls on FAA to modernize 'the antiquated Air Traffic Control Tower at Page Field"
- WINK News 2/13 TV Exclusive *HERE*.
- WINK News 2/14 TV Exclusive *HERE*.
- Social Media Summary Graphics Roll-Out *HERE*.
- Read the Full Text of the Letter *HERE* or Below:

Dear Administrator Whitaker:

I write today to express my concern about the situation at Page Field—which is a business and general aviation airport in Southwest Florida. As the Member of Congress that represents Florida's 19th Congressional District, it's my duty to convey concern when such concern comes about. In this instance, the antiquated Air Traffic Control Tower (Tower) at Page Field is of great concern to several aviation companies, aircraft owners, aviation flight academies, and individuals that live in the Southwest Florida community.

For background, the Tower at Page Field has been subcontracted out by the FAA—even though, due to expanded aviation activities, such contractual action would not occur today. Simply put, the Tower's infrastructure and technology are outdated, and the Tower needs to be modernized and rebuilt. Additionally, my office has heard of several instances of unprofessional Tower controller actions, and while there may be an argument that the Tower is underfunded, I believe the FAA should be concerned and brought into the conversation when safety risks present themselves. Though I understand that Tower controllers are often overwhelmed and overworked balancing several different operational roles, there is no excuse for unprofessionalism and inadequate communication.

I also find it insufficient that, oftentimes, the Tower only has one controller handling all Tower operations. Around the country, air traffic control towers are generally operated by three individuals—with each individual controller handling a single key function (e.g., clearance delivery, ground control, and local tower control). In my view, it's never acceptable to task a single controller with managing these three crucial operational functions. In the alternative, I believe a minimum of two controllers should be handling Tower operations at all times—particularly during busy times of day and through the entirety of SWFL's tourist season.

To proactively ensure the safety of my constituents in Southwest Florida, I also write today seeking transparency about the FAA's ongoing decision process relating to the modernization of the Tower. Especially with the recent plane crash in Southwest Florida that took the lives of two individuals, and with the recent plane crash in Clearwater, Florida, I believe that federal funding should be prioritized and expeditiously deployed to modernize and rebuild the Tower—which in turn will enhance aviation activities at Page Field while simultaneously reducing potential safety risks to the SWFL community in the future.

Therefore, I respectfully request a response to the following questions:

- When do you expect the Tower modernization process to begin, when do you expect the Tower's modernization process to be complete, how much funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will be allocated to modernize the Tower, and where does the Tower's modernization effort stand on the FAA's priority list for spending IIJA funding?
  - Can you please explain the oversight process associated with the FAA overseeing FAA subcontracted towers? In the event an FAA subcontracted tower consistently receives complaints relating to such tower's lack of professionality, what are potential ways the FAA can remedy the situation?
- Can you also explain how the FAA incorporates the views of individuals, businesses, and relevant government authorities relating to the performance of FAA subcontracted towers?
- Do you believe that inadequate air traffic control tower performance can increase the likelihood of aviation-related safety incidents–especially in a populated area such as Southwest Florida?
- On Friday, February 9th, 2024, Page Field was closed to aviation flight academies because of a NOTAM issued by the FAA for an event titled "Old Guys Fly In." Can you please provide information relating to the issuance of the NOTAM, including whether FAA considered the impact of such NOTAM on aviation flight academies?

Thank you for taking my thoughts and concerns into consideration, and I look forward to receiving a response from you soon.

Sincerely,

Byron Donalds (FL-19) Member of Congress

Remarks at House Financial Services Committee Hearing

The digital assets industry is in its infancy stage.

A major concern of mine is if Washington will try to effectuate an outcome in the industry by:

- Over regulating industry actors
- Getting in the way
- Stifling innovation

This has happened before. It shouldn't happen again.

Donalds Joins Call For Biden To Take Cognitive Ability Test

The American people can no longer be left to wonder about their safety & security because of Joe Biden's declining cognitive ability.

If Biden believes he is cognitively fit for duty, he should prove it. I stand with Rep. Ronny Jackson & my colleagues in this important effort.

See Fox News Exclusive *HERE*.

Perry–Donalds Joint Statement On Navalny's Death

No matter where they occur, these atrocities must be resoundingly and unequivocally condemned.

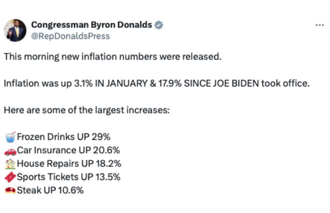
Mr. Navalny's death is a conspicuous and significant blow to the worldwide pro-freedom and anti-tyranny fight.

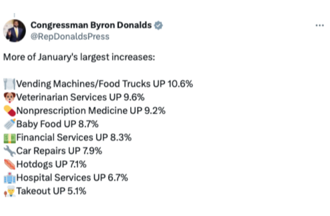
See Joint Statement *HERE*.

January Inflation Numbers Are Here

Inflation was up 3.1% in January & 17.9% since Joe Biden took office.

Here are some of the largest increases:

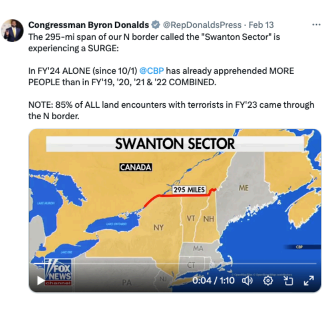


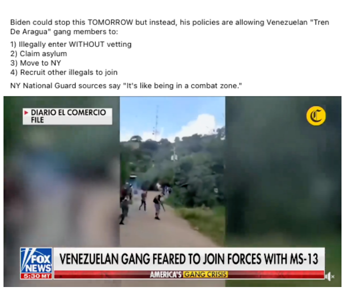


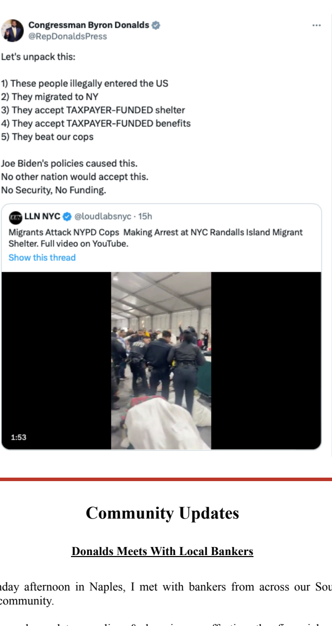
An Update On The Border Crisis

Last week, the crisis on our border further devolved:

1. Swanton Sector (NY, VT, NH) is experiencing a historic surge
2. Venezuelan "Tren De Aragua" gang members are exploiting Biden's open border and creating a "combat zone" for the NY National Guard
3. San Diego Sector is experiencing a historic surge
4. 20,000+ Chinese illegal aliens have entered our country since Oct. 1
5. Illegal aliens at a taxpayer funded facility in New York City were filmed beating NYPD officers







Community Updates

Donalds Meets With Local Bankers

On Monday afternoon in Naples, I met with bankers from across our Southwest Florida community.

We discussed regulatory policy & key issues affecting the financial services industry, our state, & our nation. Thank you to all of the members of the Florida Bankers Association who joined us today.

Donalds Remembers Edward Murphy And Ian Hoffmann

Thank you to the first responders and Good Samaritans who rushed to the scene of the crash.

Erika and I pray for the strength of the Murphy and Hoffmann families.

May Edward and Ian's memories be a blessing.

Team Donalds Remembers The Victims Of The Parkland Massacre

Six years ago, an attack of unconscionable evil occurred in Parkland, Florida.

We will never forget the 17 innocent souls lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Erika & I pray for the strength of the Parkland community.

Naples Fort Myers Named #1 Boating Destination In United States

Naples Fort Myers was just named the #1 boating destination in America.

There is no better place to vacation than in Southwest Florida & the boating culture within our community is world-renowned.

Thankful to call this paradise home.

See Article HERE

"The Great American Race"

Known as "The Great American Race," Florida's iconic Daytona 500 is one of the most iconic events in all of sports.

This President Day, let's take a look back at one of the most memorable openings to a Daytona 500 2024.

To all attending, have a great time with friends & family.

Spring Training 2024 Begins in Southwest Florida

It's that time again

We welcome all who will be joining us in SWFL for Spring Training 2024.

2/14 - Pitchers & catchers reported
2/24 - First Twins home game (Fort Myers)
2/25 - First Red Sox home game (Fort Myers)

Grapefruit League action lasts through the end of March.

Team Donalds Celebrates 86th Annual Edison Festival Of Light

On Saturday, hundreds of thousands came to Fort Myers to celebrate the 86th Annual Edison Festival of Light.

Known as the largest night parade in the Southeastern United States, this parade honors the life and legacy of Thomas Edison-longtime Fort Myers resident and father of the light bulb.

Wishing a wonderful night to all who attended

In The Media – Print Media

An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership

Perry Legislation Is Crypto's Greatest Ensure

EXCLUSIVE: U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds Calls On FAA To Modernize "The Antiquated Air Traffic Control Tower At Page Field"

EXCLUSIVE: Congressman Byron Donalds Speaks On Problems At Page Field

EXCLUSIVE: Congressman Byron Donalds Believes Ian Too Belief Is Stalled In Senate

Donalds Introduces Bill To Honor Famous Abolitionist

Florida Rep. Byron Donalds Blasts Health Official On Climate Change Video For Black Communities

Rep. Donalds To Newsmax: Expect More Threats Under "Weak" Biden

U.S. Must Remain "World Leader In Nuclear Power", Axom

In The Media – Digital Media

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined Spectrum News Black History Month

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Featured on Newsline on Newsmax

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined The War Room on Real America's Voice

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Featured on The Faulkner Focus on Fox News Channel

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined Daybreak With Dave Steele on 92.3 Fox News Radio Fort Myers

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined The Hill on NewsNation

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined The Bottom Line on Fox Business Network

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Featured on CBS Fort Myers WINK News 6:00 PM News Exclusive

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Featured on CBS Fort Myers WINK News 5:00 PM News Exclusive

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined Newsline on Newsmax

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined The Ingraham Angle on Fox News Channel

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Featured on CBS Fort Myers WINK News 3:00 PM News Exclusive

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

8/7/23 Rep. Donalds Joined Elizabeth Vargas Reports on NewsNation

Watch my full interview HERE or click below:

Serving the hardworking men and women of Florida's 19th Congressional District is my distinct honor and privilege. It's time Washington works for our community's values, and I will always strive to ensure your government is working for you every day.

Sincerely,

Byron V. Donalds
Member of Congress

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