

# U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



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January 9, 2021

Dear Fellow Marylander:

Well, 2021 was supposed to be the start of a fresh new year. Like other Marylanders, I had wished for a global reset and the opportunity to put our nation on a healthy, positive track for the future. An [armed insurrection](#) – a mob invasion of the United States Capitol Building – wasn't on my bingo card.

On Wednesday, January 6, after being [told directly by President Donald Trump](#) to march on the Capitol, thousands of his supporters did just that. Some came ready for a fight with [pipe bombs](#), zip ties, guns and other weapons. Others swarmed the Capitol like unruly tourists, taking selfies, looking for prizes and vandalizing the seat of our government.

To be clear, [the invaders never should have made it into the Capitol](#), which is secured regularly for inaugurations, State of the Union addresses, and other major events. Why this mob was able to saunter through the building with seemingly little opposition has me fuming, but that will be a discussion for another time. I know Congress and appropriate law enforcement authorities will study in great detail to ensure it never happens again.

As intense as this episode was for me – being locked down on the Senate floor and then swept away by security with my colleagues to a safer location – it really was a sad day for democracy.

What happened Wednesday most certainly can be defined as [domestic terrorism](#), if not sedition. It's quite unfathomable that the sitting president of the United States encouraged this deadly chaos – an invasion of the United States Capitol.

In fact, no one should have been too surprised that it came to this. The horrendous images we all witnessed were the natural culmination of years of divisive, racist and selfish language coming from Donald Trump. After four years in the White House, he has never learned that being president of the United States is about serving the country and not how the country can serve him.

I know there are people who read this weekly email who supported Donald Trump. We disagree about that. However, after watching the images coming out of the Capitol this week, we should all agree that violent behavior and such blatant disregard for the rule of law can never be normalized – not in our country or any other.

Since George Washington peacefully transferred power to his successor, John Adams, in March 1797, American democracy has set the standard worldwide for its orderly transitions. Elections with results [much closer than 2020](#) were settled through civil discourse and peaceful debate. That streak has now been obliterated and America's standing as a world leader of democracy and human rights has been shattered, similar to the glass windows of the House of Representatives.

We can easily replace glass windows, but [it will take years to rebuild America's reputation](#) and to rebuild trust within our country.

Let me take a moment to thank the thousands of Marylanders who contacted my office by phone, email or other means over the last few days asking about my personal safety and that of our staff. It means the world to all of us that you cared enough to reach out and let us know you were thinking of us. Moments like these are when thoughts and prayers do the most good.

I appreciated every text message and note about my safety, but my biggest concern coming out of Wednesday's insurrection truly is the safety and the future of our republic. [Democracy is fragile](#). It needs care and attention and a willingness to communicate and empathize with fellow citizens. So much of that was lacking on Wednesday.

America is not perfect. But recognizing our faults and aspiring to do better is part of our ethos. Together, we must address the divisiveness that led us to this volatile point in history and resolve to find a peaceful way forward that upholds our values without tearing others down. Authoritarianism is not the American way, neither is mob rule. We must resolve to root out the

causes of racism, anti-Semitism and all-too-casual hate and lawlessness that was on display at the Capitol this week and have been publicly erupting for years.

On January 20, at the very same Capitol that was invaded and desecrated on Wednesday, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will take the oath to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.” I stand ready to work with them and all Members of Congress to harness all the strength and goodwill of the American people to get us back on a path toward healing, redemption and trust. It will not be easy, but the prize is a nation that we can all be proud of, one that celebrates our common American experience and recognizes our incredible diversity as a strength.

This week was a turning point for our country. A wake up call for some. An exclamation point for others. As President Theodore Roosevelt said, “This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.” That is our journey’s end, our mission.

I am honored to represent the people of Maryland and thank you for sharing this journey with me. Please stay safe.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing 'B' and a cursive 'en'.

Ben Cardin

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