

U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



www.cardin.senate.gov



[@SenatorCardin](https://twitter.com/SenatorCardin)



[SenatorBenCardin](https://www.facebook.com/SenatorBenCardin)



[@senatorcardin](https://www.instagram.com/senatorcardin)

Dear Friend,

I was overcome with an uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach as I saw the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in the United States surpassed 3 million. That means more than 3 million mothers, fathers, grandparents, children, and other loved ones have had their lives turned upside down. We also have suffered more than [135,000 deaths](#), all of which cannot be justified by simply blaming an increase in testing.

Testing does not cause people to be infected. According to Johns Hopkins [data](#), the national positivity rate has [doubled](#) in the last month -- with the seven-day moving average increasing from 4.4% on June 9 to 8.4% on July 9.

The U.S. is leading the world in coronavirus cases, and the president describes this as a "[badge of honor](#)." In fact, it is the complete opposite.

We must do better.

Maryland has worked to "[flatten the curve](#)" by practicing social distancing, wearing masks and keeping up with public health guidelines. Through our vigilant efforts statewide and an increase in testing, we have reached a milestone of two weeks with a [positivity rate](#) of at or below five percent. After downward trends in April and May, hospitalization rates continue to fluctuate though, so we must not lose sight of the fact that the fight is far from over. We are still in the first wave of this global pandemic.

Across the country, many states are seeing a [surge in cases](#), particularly in Arizona, Texas, Florida, Georgia, and California. Each day sees [trends moving in the wrong direction](#), sending overall daily cases to record highs. Texas alone has reported [more than 10,000 new cases daily](#) for multiple days since July 4. Last weekend, [Florida](#) reported a record 11,400 cases.

As we saw with states that were hit hard early, the health care systems in these new hotspot states are being pushed to their breaking points. Many hospitals have reached [capacity](#) in their intensive care units and acute care beds.

Our health care heroes continue to face these unprecedented situations with unflappable dedication.

The outbreaks happening around the country are happening in states that [rushed to reopen](#), ignoring the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization. Especially over the [Fourth of July weekend](#), we saw mass gatherings and thousands of people flocking to beaches, bars, and restaurants – often with no masks and little to no social distancing.

As the president and others ignore the science and advice from health professionals, we are seeing a disturbing [rise in cases](#) particularly among those in their 20s and 30s. Axios reports that the proportion of young people hospitalized for COVID-19 has grown: “40% of hospitalizations for COVID-19 at the end of June were for people 18–49-years-old, compared to 26% at the end of March, according to the COVID-NET database of hospitalizations in 14 states. In [Los Angeles County](#), nearly half of all cases are now people under 40-years-old. Young people may also unwittingly expose their older family members to a heightened risk of contracting the virus.

This novel coronavirus does not know how old you are. It does not know what part of town you live in, or whether the person it infects is a Democrat or a Republican. Saying, “*it will not happen to me*,” does not create a magical barrier around you to keep you safe at a crowded bar or at a busy beach. It can happen to you.

The stories you may [see on TV](#) or on the Internet are not just sad memes. There are many real examples of people who [assumed they were not at risk](#) of contracting COVID-19, went about their normal daily business thinking they were immune, but became sick. Some went to parties or barbeques, others simply went to work thinking this was a distant problem, even media hype. Protecting ourselves and our community is so simple that there is no excuse not to follow public health guidelines.

Even if you still don’t think it will ever happen to you, we all must do our part to protect our families, friends, and community.

Whatever your age group, it is essential that we listen and truly follow guidance from public health professionals as we go about our daily lives. This will be especially important as schools across the country begin formulating plans for what the 2020-2021 academic school year. School boards and colleges across the nation are [devising and revising plans](#) for the safest way to allow students and educators to return to classrooms and campuses this fall, potentially at the same time we may face a second surge of cases.

Many colleges and universities, such as University of Maryland, have proposed “[hybrid](#)” [semesters](#), half online/at-home and half in-person attendance. Students, educators, and parents all want to see the return of in-class instruction, but we also want everyone to stay safe. We must take all precautions to protect the health and safety of our students, educators, and staff, as well as the families they return home to at night.

The message for all of us remains as valid as ever: Be Safe. Be Smart. Show respect for your family, friends, and our community by wearing a mask or face covering when in public or near others. Wash your hands frequently. Avoid crowds and use social distancing.

Young and old, high risk and low-risk, please do not wait until it is too late when you are left saying, "I should have worn a mask."

Stay safe and healthy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Ben Cardin

To be removed from this mailing list, please click [unsubscribe](#)