

# U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



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Dear Friend,

Since the earliest days of this country, America has been blessed with selfless men and women who put country before self. Driven by a profound sense of patriotism, they have been willing to sacrifice everything in order to defend the freedoms that define our nation. Some will never understand that level of courage. For all of us, it is a debt impossible to repay, so we show our gratitude by honoring these heroes – by providing support and resources to our military, veterans and their families – and paying tribute to those we have lost.

Each day, I am thankful for and remember the sacrifices that so many have made defending our freedoms. I am thankful to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and coastguardsmen who keep our country safe and the families who stand by them daily.

My thoughts and prayers are with all the families in Maryland and across the United States who lost loved ones protecting our country, and all those who still live with the physical and mental scars of war.

Supporting our troops and recognizing the service and sacrifice of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, Veterans and Gold Star families, and commemorating the men and women in uniform who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our democracy is paramount.

What is in it for them? They understand the higher calling in defending family, community and country. Life is not solely a series of transactional actions. For these heroes, the positive ideals of America resonate with meaning: the freedoms to speak, worship, think, and dissent. These heroes know that freedom and integrity, courage and equality, truth and fairness are values worth defending. Such core values should never be discounted or traded away. These are the pillars of the democracy that so many have died to protect.

According to [The Military Times](#), since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, the State of Maryland has lost 126 men and women in service to our country. These Marylanders represent the peak of service and heroism.

Those who have fought and died in other wars and military conflicts, whose graves are located on hallowed grounds located all around the world, should continue to receive honor and respect from us all. They are the guardians of democracy and their graves serve as eternal reminders of the cost of hate.

One such hero is [Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> Class John David Randolph Hilty from Bowie, Maryland](#). Sgt. Hilty was serving in Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, helping to defeat ISIL, when he died this past March 30, 2020. This was after completing three previous tours to Afghanistan and earning several awards for his valiant service, including the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Joint Service Achievement Medal. He was remembered by those who knew him as a tremendous leader, a dear friend, and a devoted husband, father, and son. I am incredibly thankful for Sgt. Hilty's service to our country, and sorry for the loss of such a wonderful member of our community.

We are forever indebted to the brave individuals like Sgt. Hilty who gave their lives to keep the rest of us safe. But, as President John F. Kennedy once said, "we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

I urge all Americans to reflect on the values that these men and women defended and redouble our efforts to uphold them. We honor their sacrifices by working together to build and preserve the America that they fought for.

Please stay safe.



Ben

*One way to honor these heroes is to vote and have your voice heard in the upcoming election. For more information, including how to request an absentee ballot online, please find [more details here](#).*