



November 14, 2020

Dear Fellow Marylander:

After a vicious campaign and polarizing election almost ripped apart our young country, a victorious President Thomas Jefferson in 1801 sought to unify the country in what would be his first Inaugural Address.

*“... This being now decided by the voice of the nation, enounced according to the rules of the Constitution, all will of course arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good.”*

Although the election that President-elect Joe Biden recently won by [more than 5 million votes](#) was nowhere near as close as Jefferson’s, our country finds itself at a similar juncture. While President Trump and key administration officials attempt to delegitimize the will of the American public by making allegations of voter fraud that are backed by neither evidence nor reality, Jefferson’s words should deliver solace to those who will be on the right side of history.

Ours is a country that will continue to arrange itself under the rule of law and ultimately be united in common efforts for the common good, if we remain vigilant. The peaceful transition of power has been a hallmark of American democracy, and it must continue to be. That’s why the refusal of Republican leaders to accept the clear results of this election are so troubling, and [potentially so damaging](#).

At this point four years ago, despite a much slimmer margin of victory and with documented evidence of foreign interference in the election, Democrats had conceded the election to Donald Trump. Recognizing the importance of a stable transition, we put the good of the country ahead of our own grievances and heavy disappointment. President Barack Obama even [hosted Mr. Trump at The White House](#) two days after the election.

By the middle of this week, even though numerous world leaders had done so following the electoral math, only a handful of my Senate Republican colleagues had publicly acknowledged Mr. Biden’s victory. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell not only refused to accept President-elect Biden’s win, he offered full-throated support for Mr. Trump’s unfounded efforts to discredit the election’s results. Apparently unable to put country ahead of party, Senator McConnell said he stood with the president on his legal challenges to the election’s integrity.

Notably, [Trump is now winless in a dozen different attempts](#) to impugn the election's credibility, and his own attorneys have been unable to offer a single actual instance of voter fraud when pressed to do so by judges around the country. In addition, a coalition of election security officials, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the National Association of State Election Directors has declared the November general election "[the most secure in American history.](#)"

The American electoral process is supposed to provide an example for the world about how democracy is should function. Counting every vote in a record-setting election is important. It takes time. But delay tactics like those employed by Trump and McConnell diminish the way the world regards our government, while dangerously slowing the exchange of information, training, and personnel that need to occur in a very short period of time for a successful transition. Such actions are doubtlessly petty and [potentially very harmful to our national security](#). Right now, for example, President-elect Biden should be receiving the [daily intelligence briefing](#), as has occurred in every other presidential transition to-date.

This obstructionism needs to stop. That's why this week Senator Chris Van Hollen joined me in calling on the head of the General Services Administration (GSA), which is legally responsible for designating the start of a presidential transition, to follow the law and mobilize the proper resources to President-elect Biden and his team. [In a letter to GSA Administrator Emily Murphy](#), we reminded her of responsibilities laid out under the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 and underscored the urgency of a timely transition, both for our nation and the many federal agencies that are located in our state and employ Marylanders.

"We hope you will recognize that every hour between now and January 20, 2021 is critical for the transition team's preparations for taking on the multiple, pressing challenges our nation faces," we wrote. "In the spirit of national unity and common purpose in addressing the needs of the American people, we request that you extend the necessary funding, resources, and assistance to the transition team upon their request and without delay."

The 1963 law we cited is a remarkable blueprint for action that lays out the action plan President Jefferson harkened to more than a century-and-a-half before. Its prescription is as simple as it is clear:

*The national interest requires that such transitions in the office of President be accomplished so as to assure continuity in the faithful execution of the laws and in the conduct of the affairs of the Federal Government, both domestic and foreign. Any disruption occasioned by the transfer of the executive power could produce results detrimental to the safety and well-being of the United States and its people. Accordingly, it is the intent of the Congress that appropriate actions be authorized and taken to avoid or minimize any disruption.*

Efforts to delay or deny the presidential transition must end immediately. This should be a time for healing and reconciliation across this great country and any effort to obscure, delay or counteract the clear will of the vast majority of American voters must be abandoned posthaste.

While battle-tested election after election, American democracy can also be fragile. We cannot take it for granted. Its ongoing success requires that those who receive the privilege of being elected to represent the American public continually endeavor to act in good faith and that we all unite in common effort, for the common good.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben". The letter "B" is large and stylized, with the "en" written in a cursive script.

Ben Cardin