

None of these people—none of them—have been helped by their government with the expenses, with the losses, with the pain that the government forced on them—not a one of them.

Mr. President, it is time to act, and I want to be crystal clear about this. If the House persists, if House leadership persists and attempts to force into a CR package a partial, backroom, special-interest deal that excludes these good people, I will object; and if they come to this body asking for a time agreement at the end of the session to pass that package, I will object.

I want to be clear about this. There is no way forward for a partial, backroom deal—no way. I will stand in the way, on behalf of every one of these Americans, as long as it takes, until justice is done. This is the time. This body has acted, and I call on the House to act. What we should do instead of their backroom deal is pass what this body has already passed: generous compensation—fair, just compensation, with a spending limit, that will fairly honor, recognize, and help these good Americans who deserve it. This isn't a handout; this is justice. This is recognition of what these good Americans have done and what they have suffered.

You know, we are near upon Christmas now, and it is sort of old-fashioned, but it used to be around Christmas time sometimes we would talk about the Christmas feeling or the Christian feeling. Well, I would just observe this: What does that Christian feeling consist of if not, in the words of Micah, “doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God”? This is a chance, I might just say, to do just that: to do justice, to show kindness, to fulfill our duty to our fellow Americans.

The Scripture admonishes us to be not just hearers but doers as well. As this year comes to a close, let's be doers of justice. Let's be demonstrators of kindness. Let's do what is right by our fellow Americans. Let's honor our countrymen for what they have done. Let's right this wrong finally, this 50-year wrong. Let's right it. Let's end the year and end the Congress with this historic righting of a wrong, and then we can say to our constituents and to our fellow Americans “Merry Christmas.” Then we can say we have truly done our jobs here.

Until that time, Mr. President, I will be here, I will be standing, and I will be advocating on their behalf.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Keli Marie Neary, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

NOMINATION OF KELI M. NEARY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Keli Marie Neary to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. She is an accomplished litigator who has devoted her entire legal career to public service in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

After receiving her undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and her law degree from Widener University Commonwealth Law School, Ms. Neary clerked on the 41st Judicial District of Pennsylvania for Perry and Juniata Counties.

Following her clerkship, Ms. Neary served as an assistant counsel in the Governor's Office of General Counsel, assigned to the Pennsylvania State Police's Office of Chief Counsel. She specialized in enforcement of the Gaming Act, personnel litigation, contract interpretation, and firearms-related due process hearings.

Since 2012, Ms. Neary has worked at the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG), currently serving as the executive deputy attorney general for the civil law division. At the OAG, she represents and defends a broad array of different government agencies, officials, and employees in matters before State and Federal courts and defends constitutional challenges to Pennsylvania statutes and regulations.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Neary has tried 13 cases to verdict. She has also participated in the briefing of hundreds of trial and appellate matters in State and Federal courts and argued numerous motions and injunctions.

Ms. Neary has the strong support of her home State Senators, Mr. CASEY and Mr. FETTERMAN. In addition, she was unanimously rated “qualified” by the American Bar Association.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Neary's nomination.

VOTE ON NEARY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Neary nomination?

Mr. CRAPO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 318 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Baldwin	Cardin	Durbin
Bennet	Carper	Fetterman
Blumenthal	Casey	Gillibrand
Booker	Coons	Hassan
Brown	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Cantwell	Duckworth	Hickenlooper

Hirono	Ossoff	Stabenow
Kaine	Padilla	Tester
Kelly	Peters	Van Hollen
Kim	Reed	Warner
King	Rosen	Warnock
Klobuchar	Sanders	Warren
Lujan	Schatz	Welch
Manchin	Schiff	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Murphy	Shaheen	
Murray	Smith	

NAYS—48

Barrasso	Fischer	Murkowski
Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Braun	Hagerty	Risch
Britt	Hawley	Romney
Budd	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—3

Markey	Sinema	Vance
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Minnesota.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, at 3:45 p.m. today, I ask the Chair to execute the order of November 20 with respect to the Dixon nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:42 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to say good-bye, as difficult as this may be.

Marylanders have trusted me to represent them for 20 years in the Maryland General Assembly, 8 years as speaker of the house, 20 years in the House of Representatives, and 18 years in the U.S. Senate, including now chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Let me start by thanking Marylanders for giving me your trust to represent you in this august body. You have supported me in 18 elections. The Hebrew letter for 18 is chai, which also means life—58 years of my life.

My grandparents came to this country over 100 years ago to escape the pogroms of Europe, and they settled in

Baltimore and built a life for their family. Their grandson now serves in the U.S. Senate. This is a great country.

Marylanders have allowed me to pursue my ambition of public service, to help others whose voices and needs are often ignored in the halls of power. In my family, I was taught from a young age that it is our responsibility to make the world a better place—*tikkun olam*, repair the world—and help those who are less fortunate and are in need—*tzedakah*, charity.

These principles were demonstrated to me by the communal activities of my parents. These principles—these values—have been my North Star that has guided my public service as a legislator. Of course, the work of a legislator is not always easy. It requires perseverance, patience, a sense of humor, and optimism that we can make the world a better place, even in the face of often horrible, seemingly insurmountable challenges.

But as I look back at my time here, it is the hardest battles that were some of the most rewarding. Each one reflects the values I cherish and the collective will to help make the world around us and our communities a better place to live.

On the Senate Finance Committee, I have had a front seat advancing health policy. I was fortunate to serve with the champion of healthcare, Senator Ted Kennedy. He was a mentor to me as to steps we can take so that all Americans have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

Healthcare should be a right for everyone in this country and not a privilege only for those who can afford it.

I was proud to be part of the Congress that passed the Affordable Care Act. That law included my legislation that elevated the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities at NIH. As much progress as this has brought, the struggle for healthcare equality continues.

Today, Medicare coverage includes legislation I authored for screening and preventive care, saving lives and dollars. And all health insurance now covers pediatric dental care, which was legislation I authored after the tragic death of Demonte Driver, a 12-year-old in Maryland whose life could have been saved with a simple tooth extraction.

I partnered with Senator Rob Portman in both the House and in the Senate to expand retirement security, particularly for lower wage workers. Thanks to legislation we coauthored that has been enacted into law, more employers are providing opportunities for their employees to participate in retirement plans. Our legislation included a saver's credit for lower wage workers and automatic enrollment provisions that have dramatically increased participation by employees. In the last 10 years, participation in retirement savings for the lowest income quintile of Americans has increased by 135 percent.

In affordable housing and economic development in underserved communities, I have worked with Senator CANTWELL on improvements to the low-income housing tax credit. I have authored successful legislation to expand the new markets tax credits and historic tax credits, which have been used for economic development and affordable housing opportunities across Maryland and our Nation.

Examples of the use of these tools in Maryland include the Justice Thurgood Marshall Center in Baltimore, the Natty Boh building in Baltimore, and the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center in Annapolis. And, yes, just yesterday, Senator VAN HOLLEN and I were at the Southern Stream Health and Wellness Center, which used new markets tax credits with Bishop Hickman, which is energizing and revitalizing communities in East Baltimore.

On the Environment and Public Works Committee, I have had the opportunity to expand the Federal Government's commitment to our infrastructure. The recently enacted bipartisan infrastructure law included many of my priorities. For example, it included funding for reconnecting communities that had been divided and disadvantaged through ill-conceived transportation projects. The poster child for this initiative is the Franklin-Mulberry corridor in Baltimore. It was not surprising that Baltimore received funding in the first round of Federal grants.

I am equally proud of the expansion of the Transportation Alternatives Program, or TAP. I was the author of the TAP program, which allows governments to make their own priority decisions on the use of part of the Federal highway funds. That has been a favorite source of funds to provide trails for local communities that connect neighborhoods for walkers and bikers, including, for example, the rehabilitation of the C&O Towpath in Washington, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties.

Myrna and I take advantage of these paths to absorb the beauty of our communities that are now connected through paths and trails.

Older communities still have lead pipes bringing drinking water into their homes and schools, threatening the health of our children. The bipartisan infrastructure law provides significant help to eliminate this public health threat, including \$82 million in Federal grants for Maryland. It also provides unprecedented increases in transit funding, a priority of mine which is particularly important to traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities.

This law allows Maryland to move forward again with the transit Red Line in Baltimore. Funding for Amtrak enabled Baltimore to begin construction of the Frederick Douglass Tunnel to expedite travel along the Northeast corridor.

One of my top priorities as a Maryland Senator has been to promote the

health of the Chesapeake Bay, and the Federal partnership has been essential in this cause. The bay is a national treasure, the largest estuary in our hemisphere and iconic to Maryland. It is in our DNA, particularly important to our economy and our way of life.

I first started fighting for the bay in the Maryland General Assembly. When I was speaker of the house, I partnered with Governor Harry Hughes to establish the multi-State effort to save the bay. It led to the partnership with six States and the District of Columbia and the Federal Bay Program.

Maryland Senators have taken the Federal lead, starting with Senator Mac Matthias, then Senators Paul Sarbanes and Barbara Mikulski, and now Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and myself.

During my years in the Senate, I have worked with my colleagues to increase funds for the bay, including the EPA, NOAA, the Army Corps of Engineers, wastewater treatment funds, watershed grant funds, agriculture land preservation funds, oyster restoration funds, removal of invasive species—from the nutria to the blue catfish—and many, many more.

I particularly want to note with pride funding for Poplar Island and Mid-Bay—location for dredging disposals—that have been used for environmental restoration and a non-controversial location necessary to keep our channels commercially competitive.

Our work on the Chesapeake Bay is working and has become a global model of multijurisdictional cooperation.

The Environment and Public Works Committee helps each region of our country that suffers from a catastrophic event that destroys infrastructure. I thank the leadership of the committee for reaching out to Maryland after the tragic loss of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The Biden administration has been there every step of the way to help Maryland, and I am confident that Congress will provide the resources and authority to move forward on the construction of the new bridge as quickly as possible.

I have been both a chair and ranking member on the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee. I am so proud of the bipartisan work of the committee, working with Senator RUBIO, particularly during COVID. The historic relief packages we designed not only saved many small businesses but truly helped to save our economy during the pandemic.

I am particularly proud of the focus I brought to help traditionally underserved communities. Senator WARNER and I worked to provide support for the CDFIs so financing options were available in underbanked communities. Including nonprofits and returning citizens to the program once again provided help and services in often forgotten neighborhoods.

During my chairmanship, Maryland expanded from one to four women's business centers. Two are located at

HBCUs. In addition, Maryland opened its first Veterans Business Outreach Center. Because of these programs, small businesses are thriving in Maryland, especially those led by women and, particularly, women of color.

My service in Congress built on my record of inclusion started with my service in the Maryland General Assembly. As a Baltimore City legislator, I fought for equalization in State educational funds to favor poorer property wealth jurisdictions, such as Baltimore City. I helped develop the Maryland hospital all-payer rate system for equal healthcare access regardless of economic circumstances. Under this system, Maryland has avoided having charity hospitals. As a Member of the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, I have helped preserve and strengthen the Maryland hospital rate system.

I was the leader in the State of Maryland for the development of the Circuit Breaker Property Tax Credit Program, which allows seniors to remain in their homes.

And as speaker of the house, I appointed the first woman and the first African American to chair a standing committee.

One of my proudest accomplishments as a legislator came in the U.S. Senate. It was the passage and enactment of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act. This law was inspired by the death of Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian tax attorney who was murdered, 15 years ago last month, for uncovering corruption. His story has been told to the world by his client Bill Browder and came to my attention as the chair of the Helsinki Commission.

When I was first elected to Congress in 1987, my family was deeply involved in the cause of getting Soviet Jews out of the Soviet Union. My wife Myrna was a leader of the Maryland Committee for Soviet Jewry. My close friend, Representative STENY HOYER, chaired the U.S. Helsinki Commission that took up the cause of Soviet Jews and gave me the opportunity to become involved. STENY and I traveled together to several countries behind the Iron Curtain to give hope to those who were living in countries where their leaders denied their citizens basic human rights.

So when Sergei Magnitsky was killed, it was clear to me that those who violated his basic rights needed to be held accountable, even if the Russian Government refused to act. The Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act targeted those individuals who were complicit in his jailing and murder. It blocked these individuals from enjoying the benefits of America, from traveling to our country and using our banking system. It put their reputation, ability to travel, and access to their assets at risk.

These policies were influenced by Senator Scoop Jackson's legislation, the Jackson-Vanik Law, that denied trade privileges to countries that

blocked their citizens from emigrating. When Jackson-Vanik was repealed because its purpose had been accomplished, it was appropriate that that legislation was used as the vehicle to replace Jackson-Vanik with Magnitsky.

The original Magnitsky Law focused on human rights abuses in Russia, and, in 2016, I authored the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, which expanded the legislation around the world.

These laws have given birth to a whole new international legal framework for upholding human rights and deterring corrupt actors. The European Union and other governments around the world have replicated the Magnitsky system. As of this year, the U.S. program has sanctioned more than 650 foreign persons and entities.

But I have to underline a really important point. These laws were not easy to pass. The pushback from Russia alone was historic and continues to this day. But it was the bipartisan support that allowed these bills to make it through the process. I want to acknowledge Senators Dick Lugar, John McCain, and ROGER WICKER, my partners in getting the Magnitsky Laws enacted. As a result, they have not only been enacted, but they have been very effective.

Despite setbacks and opposition, we never gave up hope, and, today, corrupt leaders fear the Magnitsky sanctions. The safety of human rights defenders has benefited from these laws.

Over and over again, in my work as a legislator, I have seen the importance of never giving up. Across my years in Congress, I have seen what I thought would be a dream come true. I have seen the Soviet Jews liberated from the former Soviet Union, the Berlin Wall torn down, former communist-controlled countries now NATO allies, and political prisoners released to freedom. It is great to see my friend Vladimir Kara-Murza free from being imprisoned in Russia.

As Vaclav Havel, the reform leader of the Czech Republic, said, "There is only one thing I will not concede: that it might be meaningless to strive in a good cause." Each of us can make a difference. Never give up hope.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve."

As my friend and classmate in the House of Representatives—along with my classmate KWEISI MFUME—Representative John Lewis, said, we should all be willing to get into "good trouble."

As that famous philosopher from Baltimore, Babe Ruth, stated, "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."

I often speak about the need for a value-based approach to policymaking. This has rung true in healthcare and the environment, promoting a dignified retirement, creating economic opportunities for all. Perhaps nowhere has

this been more fundamental than when it comes to foreign policy and national security.

President Biden got it right when he spoke about our international engagement. He said:

We must start with diplomacy rooted in America's most [cherished] democratic values: defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity.

As chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I made promoting value-based foreign policy decisions a top priority. In addition to the Magnitsky Act, I am especially proud of my work with TODD YOUNG on the Combating Global Corruption Act that was enacted in 2023. That legislation requires each of our Embassies around the world to evaluate how effective the country in which our Embassy is located is in fighting corruption. The model used for this legislation is similar to the trafficking in persons tier rankings and reports, with consequences against countries that are not making acceptable progress to improve their rankings against human trafficking.

Leading globally against human trafficking and corruption is America's value-based foreign policy at its finest. America's strength is in our values. We need to lead globally with our strength.

My ability to promote legislation and policies that uphold core universal values was made possible because of my incredible partners, because of their deep values and commitment. There is no way I could have achieved what I have been able to achieve if it weren't for my incredible staff. Their loyalty, their dedication to public service, and their talent made the Cardin Team.

In 38 years in Congress, I have only had two chiefs—Dave Koshgarian and Chris Lynch. Both led by example and recruited the very best to public service.

For over 25 years, Debbie Yamada has attempted to manage the impossible—me.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a complete list of the staff I have been blessed to have during my terms in the U.S. Senate.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

SENATOR BEN CARDIN'S STAFF
HOUSE AND SENATE

Derek Abrams, Femeia Adamson, Geoffrey Alexander, Audrey Allen, Kevin Alvarez, Beatrice Amoateng, Nina Anand, Michelle Ash, Carleton Atkinson, Elizabeth Baden, Bhavjeet Basson, Katharine Beamer, Beth Bell, Jill Berger, Shameka Bloyce, Tommy Bredar, Carol Brey, Helen Brocato, Royce Brooks, Shailee Bruck, Andy Buchsbaum, Katie Byerly, LaJuan Calhoun, Heather Campbell, David Carroll.

Sean Cavanaugh, Staphanie Chin, Mark Clack, Benjamin Clark, Erin Clarke, Katherine Close, Renee Cohen, Jonathan Cohen, Joel Cohen, Andre Coleman, Angel Colon-Rivera, Jessica Cook, Titus Cornell, Katie

Corr, Shayna Cram, Martha Cramer, Loraine Crompton, Debbie Curtis, Amy Daiger, Jennifer Dailey, Destiny Davis, Gil de Jesus, Sandra Delaney, Meera Dheer, Megan Dickey.

Teresa Dingboom, Amy diRusso, Nia Duggins, Geni Dunnells, Lauren Dunnock, Venetta Edwards, Andy Elias, Michael Enright, Danny Evans, Lienna Feleke-Eshete, Karen Fields, Bailey Fine, Philip Flannery, Weezie Foster, Chris Fowler, Shannon Frede, Nellie Freeman, Daniel Friedman, Michelle Galdamez, Laura Gamble, Flannery Geoghegan, Caleb Gibson, Sarah Gisriel, Caroline Goodbody, Linda Grahne.

Max Green, Sarah Greenberger, Walt Greenhalgh, Jesse Haladay, Stephen Ham, Peter Hammen, Tiffany Hannon, Denise Harrison, Jarryd Hawkins, Margo Hecht, Bill Henry, Mike Henry, Jonathan Heppen, Yvonne Hernandez, Jim Hettelman, Shelly Hettelman, Julia Hooks, Alexandra Hughes, Anne Irby, Jolene Ivey, Joshua Izaak, Ann Jacobs, Lauren Jee, Rachel Jessee, Dina Johns.

Emily Johnson, Katherine Johnson, Rachel Jones, Dana Jones, Matthew Kasper, Sue Kopen Katcef, Jenn Kaufmann, Matt Kearney, David Klein, Josh Klein, Stephen Knable, Shane Knisley, Dave Koshgarian, Sam Koshgarian, Rori Kramer, Kimberly Kratovil, Vikram (Vik) Kulkarni, Flip Kreitner, Patricia Kullen, Aiko Lane, Jordan Law, Annalisa Leandri, Ann Lee, Renae Lee, Liz Leibowitz.

Joyce Leviton, Roderick Lewis, Unice Lieberman, Arnell Limberry, Paige Linardi, Alicia Linthicum-Amos, Chris Lynch, Lindsey MacGregor, Kevin Mack, Colin Maczka, Joe Mastrangelo, Bill Mathias, Hammad Matin, Chris Matthai, Gray Maxwell, Sean McClintock, Joe McKelvey, Sean McKew, Marlon Medrano, Tomas Melia, Tom Melia, Elise Mellinger, Alexandra Menardy, Ian Mendelsohn, Amanda Mendoza.

Dawana Merritt, Rob Metz, Ryan Middleton, Michele Moghis, Katherine Mongé, Elysa Montfort, Sean Moore, Michael Morgan, Demetrius Morris, Erin Morton, Mary Jo Neville, Jonathan Ng, Aaron Ng, Anh Nguyen, Bianca Oden, Jinmi Odunlami, Katie O'Neill, Stephanie Oviedo, Sanjay Palat, Shivani Pampati, Lydia Parker, Marga Pasternak, Bill Paton, Brianna Paterson.

Corinne Paul, Ashley Peddicord-Austin, Alex Pederson, Lynn Pekkanen, Jessica Pellegrino, Carolyn Perlmutter, Andrew Perlstein, Chris Pumphrey, Ken Reichard, Andrew Remo, Joyce Revell, Edgar Rodriguez, Lucia Rodriguez, Helen Rogers, Joan Rombro, Erwin Rose, Lauren Rosenthal, Priscilla Ross, Algene Sajery, Isaac Salazar, Abdul Sanee, Joe Sangillo, Valli Sanmugalingam, Rita Santibanez, Sandy Sause.

Mariel Schwartz, Jodi Schwartz, Joe Scovitch, Lily Anna Segalman, Habiba Shebita, David Shulman, Oren Shur, Tessa Silverman, Katie Sloan, Kyle Smith, Arnold Solamillos, Danyelle Solomon, Sierra Solomon, Paul Somers, Matthew Spikes, Charlie Stek, Jerome Stephens, Sarah Stevens, Ron Storhaug, Susan Sullam, Robin Summerfield, Kelly Swaine, Dea Thomas, Mike Thomas.

William Tucker, Jen Tuddenham, James Ulwick, Juan Urcia-Barea, Bill Van Horne, Thalia Venetoulis, Mary Vrabel, Susan Walitsky, Suzanne Walsh, Troy Ware, Claire Warner, Jonathan Weadon, Lara Weinstein, Martin Welch, Lee Whaley, Elise Whorton, Jayson Williams, Sarita Williams, Dexter Williams, Dave Wilson, Michael Wolfe, Debbie Yamada, June Zhu, and Tim Zink.

Mr. CARDIN. Our staff works long hours for less compensation than many

of them could make in the private sector because of their commitment to public service.

To my staff, you have made Team Cardin a championship team.

I also want to salute the people who make this institution work. My heartfelt thanks to the floor staff, committee staffs, security staff, and all those who work behind the scenes to make the Senate work. I recognize and salute your dedication.

As I said at the beginning, I don't want to say goodbye. This is especially true of my colleagues, my Senate family—and you are family. These past 18 years have been the honor of my life. You have my undying gratitude for partnering with me to serve our country.

I started in the Senate in 2007 with a class of 10 new Senators. Senators Webb, McCaskill, and Corker are no longer in the Senate. I regret that Senators TESTER, BROWN, and CASEY will be leaving with me at the end of this term. To the remaining three—Senators KLOBUCHAR, SANDERS, and WHITEHOUSE—we count on you to carry on our class traditions.

I was blessed to have two seat mates during my 18 years in the Senate who are trusted friends. Senator Barbara Mikulski welcomed me to the Senate and made my transition so productive. Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and I have worked in unity for the people of Maryland. I know that he will continue to serve the people well as the senior Senator along with newly elected Angela Alsobrooks.

But the partners that made public service possible for me are my family. Myrna and I met in elementary school. Last month, we celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary—amazing that she put up with all those years. She is my strongest supporter. I could not have had the career that I had without her unconditional support and confidence.

Myrna shares my commitment of giving back to the community, and she keeps me properly grounded. When I became speaker of the house, she sent me a card to remind me of this. The card read: "To the rest of the world you may be a roaring lion, but in this house, you are just a pussycat."

(Laughter.)

I put that card on my desk in Annapolis as a constant reminder.

My son of blessed memory and my daughter Deborah supported my public career, never complaining about the family sacrifices they had to make, and I know there were many.

Finally, some parting advice. I know that many people across this country and around the world are concerned about the direction of the United States, but I am optimistic we will get through these challenges.

Now, some people might say: Optimistic? How can that be?

They read the news and say: What about our justice system? What about the rule of law? What about our democ-

racy? What about the threat of autocracies around the world and here at home? What about the resurgence of corrupt, blatantly transactional politics?

I recognize these threats. I am not naive to the dangers and challenges as we all look ahead. There are many challenges ahead of us, but we must not give up hope.

The Senate—this body of 100 Members in a nation of 335 million Americans—sustains my hope. In a 6-year term representing constituents across the United States, we have the time and resources to engage each other. We have the time to constructively work across the aisle to find areas of common agreement.

There is no institution like this in the world. It is a great honor to be a Senator, but it comes with responsibilities—to debate and vote on important issues of our times.

Over the last 18 years, I have seen firsthand how the Senate works best when we work together. I cited many examples of my successful efforts to do just that—working across the aisle to enact pension reform, small business COVID relief, advancing value-based foreign policy, and many more.

We don't have to agree on every single issue, and we never will, but when we defend the constitutional powers of this institution and the prerogatives of the legislative branch together, we create positive results for this country. The Senate is where the rubber meets the road. It is the dividing line between democracy and autocracy.

To my colleagues in the Senate, you play an important role in our democratic check and balance system. Never has it been more important for us to fight to protect our democracy, to defend the rule of law, and to stand up for our common values.

As Senators, you need to demonstrate to the American public by your actions that you can practice civility, that differences can be resolved constructively without harsh terms. We need to remember that compromise was how our Nation was formed. It can be a good thing and bring people together.

Compromise on policy but never on principles or values. Treat people with respect even when you disagree. I made that the guiding principle in my office. My staff call it Cardinesque.

Finally, let us all make it a priority to promote better knowledge and understanding of history, civic engagement, and, again, civility.

Whether promoting American values or investing in domestic priorities here at home, I ask you to let your values guide you to leave our world and our community a fairer place, a healthier place, a more peaceful place, a more prosperous place for all to benefit. Let that be our North Star.

I yield the floor.

(Applause. Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, it is with great pride that on behalf of the Maryland congressional delegation, I pay tribute to our incredible senior Senator and thank him for his service to our State and our country and, in fact, all he has done around the world.

I want to recognize the fact that STENY HOYER, Congressman HOYER, is with us on the floor as well.

Thank you, Mr. Leader, for being here.

For those of you who don't know, when BEN CARDIN was speaker of the Maryland House, STENY HOYER was president of the Maryland Senate, so they have gone way back together.

Thank you, Steny, for being here.

Colleagues, I think all of us here know BEN CARDIN for his many, many achievements and accomplishments and the fact that he is a wonderful colleague to work with. He has gone over some of those major highlights, so I am not going to repeat them all, but I do just want to flag a number of them, because the Magnitsky Act is the legislation that said the United States—it not only says we are going to stand up and protect fighters for human rights around the world, but we are going to create an enforcement mechanism to do exactly that.

We had a hearing just the other day in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reviewing that legislation. That legislation would not exist but for the fact that BEN CARDIN made it happen—first through the original Sergei Magnitsky Act and then the Global Magnitsky Act—as a champion of human rights.

So this is why Senator CARDIN is known not only for his accomplishments in Maryland and in the United States but indeed around the world, as is true with his service on the Helsinki Commission—his partner, of course, Senator ROGER WICKER—which has been standing up for human rights, fighting against hate and anti-Semitism around the world, and doing more here at home. It is a fight against discrimination.

I want to thank him for his global reach but also for all he has done here in the United States when it comes to healthcare. He recounted the story of a Marylander whose name was Deamonte Driver who died because he did not get the dental care he needed. Senator CARDIN worked to make sure that never happens again.

Whether it is housing or protecting the Chesapeake Bay or many other areas that are so important to our national life, BEN CARDIN has been a leader.

In Maryland, we are very proud of all of those achievements, but in Maryland, Senator CARDIN is known as “our friend Ben.” If you look at his TV commercials when he runs for reelection, you can find everyday people, whether it is a waterman on the Chesapeake Bay, whether it is a construction worker near the Port of Baltimore and oth-

ers, saying: Thank you to my friend Ben. And because of his great length and quality of service, many people around the State of Maryland have had a chance to meet their friend BEN.

And he began to serve the State of Maryland when he was 22 years old. When he ran for the State delegate, he was still a law student at the University of Maryland Baltimore; and for 58 consecutive years, he has served the people of our State.

And he didn't just dream of winning elections. That was not the goal; that was the means to achieve his efforts in public service. And that ethic, as he has said, began in the Cardin family long before he first ran for office.

He is the son of Dora, a school teacher, and Meyer, a State legislator and judge. His wife Myrna and his late cousin Shoshana made their names as champions for Soviet Jewry. The Cardin family believes in America as a beacon of liberty and human rights, a beacon that first inspired BEN's grandparents to immigrate here from Russia at the turn of the last century.

So I think it is fair to say that BEN CARDIN did not fall far from the Cardin tree of public service, but he has taken that family's commitment to public service to new heights, becoming, at 35 years old, the youngest ever speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates.

And I want to talk a little bit about his role here in the U.S. Senate on behalf of Team Maryland. Because he is a dear friend, there are many congressional delegations that don't have the spirit of unity that we have had in the State of Maryland, and that is a tribute to BEN CARDIN's leadership. He has been the quarterback for Team Maryland, bringing us together to make sure that we work on behalf of the priorities of the people of our State—all parts of our State, from the Baltimore area to the Washington suburbs, Eastern Shore, and Western Maryland.

I could not ask for a better partner and a better friend in the U.S. Senate, somebody who welcomed me here after I served in the House of Representatives.

I do want to relay briefly to our colleagues in the Democratic caucus something that is not as well-known, but when BEN CARDIN first arrived in the Senate from the House, having served previously as the speaker of the house of delegates in Maryland, he was interested in what the rules are of the Democratic caucus. It turns out, at the time, that the rules were not publicized among the Democratic Members of the caucus. Former Democratic leaders clearly viewed it as in their interest to keep them secret, to keep the Members of the caucus in the dark.

And so when BEN CARDIN asked for the rules, it took a little search to find them. But it is an indication, both of his attention to detail but also his understanding of his responsibility to his colleagues and in the body, that every Member, whether they are a long-serving Member or a new Member has a

chance to participate in the process. And we have since used the good work of Senator CARDIN as rules, as the chairman of the Senate Caucus Rules Committee to help expand democracy, little D, in the Democratic caucus.

Finally, I just want to say that while much has changed over those 58 years that Senator CARDIN has served our State, one thing has remained constant—bedrock—and that is the character of BEN CARDIN. You will not find a person of greater decency, a person of greater integrity than BEN CARDIN. And whether you agree or disagree with him on any particular issue, you always know that the position he has taken is one that is based in values and principles that he brings to the debate. And for that, we should all be eternally grateful.

So I know that he will be leaving this body. I have said—as I have traveled around the State, I have just been marveling at the fact that while Senator CARDIN announced that he wasn't running for reelection over a year ago, he is running so hard through the finish line. It is hard to keep up with him. In fact, he just mentioned that we were at one of the Baptist Churches in Baltimore the other day—we had been on the Eastern Shore, Western Maryland, all over the State.

So I want to thank him for that deep commitment he has to our country and the State of Maryland. I want to thank his beloved partner and wife Myrna Cardin for giving him all that strength over many years. And while he will be leaving the Senate, both myself and our incoming Senator Angela Alsobrooks know he is only a phone call away. So don't turn off your phone too often, BEN CARDIN.

To my colleagues, thank you all for being here to celebrate an incredible U.S. Senator, someone we are so proud of in the State of Maryland, our friend, my friend BEN CARDIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, after Senator BEN CARDIN announced his retirement in the spring of 2023, he and his wonderful wife Myrna recorded an extraordinary video reflecting on a life in public service nearly as long as their 60 years of marriage.

Touching on the highlights of a career that ranged from enacting the Magnitsky sanctions, about which we have heard so much today, to protecting Maryland's precious Chesapeake Bay, BEN said the unifying force behind his work has always been tzedakah, the Jewish tradition of helping wherever and whenever help is needed.

Observing BEN for the past 18 years, I have seen a statesman of keen intellect and profound decency. He is always guided by the ideals of America, his service to Maryland, and by his faith. He consistently has demonstrated the character that earned him the trust of the people of Maryland from the house of delegates to the third congressional district to the U.S. Senate.