

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.

BEN's hometown newspaper, the Baltimore Sun, described him this way:

He is a man of substance who understands complicated issues and the art of compromise.

Having partnered with Ben on initiatives to move our Nation forward, I heartily agree with that description. For example, following the tumultuous aftermath of the 2020 election, BEN was an essential leader in a bipartisan working group that crafted the Electoral Count Reform and Presidential Transition Act to better ensure smooth transfers of power between Presidential administrations.

I remember, for example, in one meeting, BEN bringing up a legal question that was absolutely essential that we resolve. It was indicative of the kind of careful legislating in which he engages.

As members of the Small Business Task Force, we coauthored the Paycheck Protection Program that helped so many businesses and employees survive the COVID pandemic.

From expanding Medicare access to improving home healthcare services to addressing opioid use disorder, BEN has been a strong and effective leader in healthcare. One of BEN's most enduring legacies will be the example, his leadership, as a champion of human rights around the world and his fearless persistent dedication to fighting anti-Semitism.

And one of my most enduring memories of BEN will be standing by his side in Tel-Aviv last October following the horrific Hamas attack on Israel.

In the aftermath of that incomprehensible evil, BEN offered words of consolation and peace as he made crystal clear that the United States will always stand shoulder to shoulder with the State of Israel.

It is significant that just before our bipartisan delegation traveled to Israel, BEN was presented with the Anne Frank Award for Human Dignity and Tolerance from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Well deserved.

It has been such an honor to serve with Senator BEN CARDIN, a leader of integrity, intelligence, and civility. I am so grateful for his efforts to strengthen our institutions, to elevate our national discourse, and to bring people together to find common ground and solve problems.

I wish BEN and Myrna much happiness in the years to come. You will be missed, BEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I would like to rise and join some of my colleagues in speaking about BEN CARDIN, but I perhaps want to take a little bit more of a personal approach to sharing my thoughts about my departing colleague.

I don't know if he remembers this, but I was elected in a special election, and I came here plopping down, sworn in on the auspicious day of Halloween. And I knew I had to meet my col-

leagues, so I started the process of going to their offices. They took me to meet everybody from John McCain sitting in his office, obviously, to Harry Reid who was here then.

But my journey to go see BEN CARDIN was different than any of my other meetings because we sat down, and he asked me about myself, and before I knew it, we were talking about Judaism.

Now, it was an amazing conversation to me because I did not realize how deep his faith was, how knowledgeable he was of the Torah, something I have been studying for decades as a non-Jew, and I found this incredible connection to him around the principles that he spoke about at the top of his speech, principles of hesed, principles of tzedakah, this idea of living a good and moral life. But what was amazing to me over these last 11 years that I have been at the Senate is that maybe some joking from time to time about Judaism, but we really haven't had much of a Torah discussion as we did on that very first day. He has never invited me to a minyan; he and I have never prayed together. He never talked to me about his religion. I have traveled around the whole world, but that first conversation was the most we ever talked about his religion and his faithfulness.

But what is amazing to me is even though we haven't spoken about it, as someone who knows and loves the religion, I will say I have seen it in him every single day. In my faith, there is a theologian that says: Everywhere you go, preach the gospel, but only sometimes use words.

I am a big believer that before you tell me about your religion, first show it to me in how you treat other people; before you preach to me how much you love your God, show it to me in how you love all of God's children; before you tell me about your passion for your faith, show it to me in your compassion for other people.

This has been the beauty of serving with my colleague BEN CARDIN because I have seen through the work and the dedication and the labors and the attention to detail and the leadership how deep his integrity is and his alignment between his beliefs and how he conducts himself in the world.

And so in honor of that, Ben, I am going to try to do something that I am sure has never been done in the history of the Senate is I am going to say goodbye to you in a d'var Torah. Now, maybe there has been a d'var Torah on the Senate floor, but I am confident in the history of America there has never been on the Senate floor a d'var Torah given by a big Black guy.

And so here it is. There is a moment in the Torah where Moses, a great leader, has been given the 10 Commandments, but the Jewish people are worshipping a golden calf. We all know the story of him crumbling, smashing the tablets, but what I didn't know until I started studying Judaism and doing

Torah studies on Fridays, I didn't know there was a moment where God said: OK. I will destroy these people and give you new people to lead.

And what was amazing to me, astonishing to me, about this story from the Torah is you would think that devotion, this fealty to God, that whatever God says goes, but Judaism struck me when I started studying the Torah as a strange faith that all of these major figures get into fights with God, whether it was the incredible story of Abraham arguing with angels about defending a city, Sodom and Gomorrah. But in this moment, what Moses said to God was:

(English translation of statement made in Hebrew is as follows:)

If you destroy these people, then erase me from your book. I want no part of you, God.

I have watched you for 11 years. And like that ideal of Moses, despite all of the imperfections of humanity, despite our faults and our foibles, despite the tragedies we have wrought unto ourselves, you have shown that leadership of Moses, not accepting the world's happenings as God's will but standing up and standing in the breach.

You have, through your work, both here in America and across the globe, you have been one of those people who has defended the weak, who has protected the vulnerable, and who has championed the best of humanity.

Yes, you have preached the gospel, my friend, but you have more profoundly dedicated your life to its work. There is an ideal in Judaism that we should all be dedicated toward tikkun olam, to healing this world.

I believe there is a God in Heaven. I share your sense of faith, and I believe at the end of this chapter of your life, God is saying: Well done, my good and faithful servant. And I know God is not done with you yet, so as you go on into the world, I simply say, as your brother, yasher koach.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I am tempted to simply say: Amen and amen to yield back, but I didn't want this moment to pass without rising, on behalf of my wife Gayle and me, to say how much we have appreciated the friendship of BEN and Myrna CARDIN and the leadership that they have shown to us as we have represented the United States of America to citizens around the world and particularly to our friends in Europe.

Myrna has been a wonderful friend to Gayle. She is deserving of all of the accolades that she has received and will receive.

I have had an opportunity in this city several times in the last few weeks to make remarks on behalf of BEN CARDIN. He suggested to me almost that he had heard enough and that I need not say anymore. But I do want to say how much I appreciate his leadership and the list of accomplishments

that he has listed and to say how grateful I will always be for BEN allowing me to be a part of the Magnitsky struggle and getting the Magnitsky Act passed and Global Magnitsky, which is renowned around the world as an effective tool against totalitarianism and corruption.

And so I would simply say that people in the audience may have happened by—I know a number of people here came for this particular purpose—but if you happened simply to be in the Gallery at this particular time, you have been—these people, Mr. President, have been subject to the testimony of a magnificent public servant. And if I serve decades more, which I do not feel that I will, if I live to be 100, I will not see a finer leader in terms of intellect, talent, in terms of savvy, in terms of accomplishment, in terms of leadership and statesmanship than I have known in the person of BEN CARDIN, and I am grateful to have been his colleague and his friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, first, I am incredibly grateful for the kind comments that my Senate family has said. I have said that my colleagues are my family, and they were certainly a lot less objective than my real family has been about some of my legislative actions.

So, first, to Senator VAN HOLLEN, he pointed out that we work together; we trust each other; and we have been able to get more done because of it. That trust has never been broken. And the two of us have been able to share information. We share a common vision of what we want for Maryland and this Nation, and it has made my service in the U.S. Senate so much more rewarding knowing that my colleague is a person who shares the burdens of our office of representing the people of Maryland and takes equal responsibility to make sure we get things done in a unified way.

So, Senator VAN HOLLEN, thank you for those very kind comments, and it is mutual. Your leadership here has benefited our State to an incredible degree.

And to Senator COLLINS, I have been at several bipartisan groups with Senator COLLINS. She has a way of just reaching out and bringing people together. And I must tell you, she sort of glossed over what we did in response to January 6 and the passage of the electoral college reforms. That was not an easy task to get that to the finish line, and Senator COLLINS was the leader on that effort and allowed me to have input where it was needed in order to bring people together. But that is what she does all the time; she always looks for common ways. There is a reason why our appropriators seem to be able to get along through the leadership of Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS. I think it is a real example for all of us.

And then to Rabbi BOOKER.

(Laughter.)

I want to know when he is going to start a synagogue because I am going to join that synagogue. I want everyone to know. His d'var Torah is a lot better than a lot of Rabbi's d'var Torahs. He is just an incredible addition to our Senate family, and I will follow him anywhere.

And to Senator WICKER, you know, what we have been able to do together, it has been an incredible run. I have been with you around the world. We have stood up to dictators, and we have helped friends. We stood by people who had no other help around them so that their rights could be heard, and we have gotten a lot done together.

There is no question that we would not have had the victories on the Magnitsky bills without your personal involvement, working within your caucus to make sure that it was not politicized and we got it to the final line, and you took a lot of hours for us, and I very much appreciate that. More importantly, human rights defenders appreciate your gallantry in the U.S. Senate to get those bills to the finish line and bills that don't have your name on it. As I mentioned, you were responsible to make sure we had vehicles to get them completed.

So I thank you for your friendship. I thank you for Gayle. And it has been, as I said, a real pleasure to have that type of relationship.

I am often asked by my colleagues: Do you ever talk to Republicans? I mean, they think we are so divided here, and this is a family. And that is why I said in my parting comments, I really see the hope of our future in the relationships that have been developed here in the U.S. Senate. We can work together. We can resolve these issues. We know what our responsibilities are about. We know we have challenges in this country, but we also know we need to listen to each other, and that is what I think we do here in the Senate. We have got to do it in a more effective way. And my colleagues that are with me today have been champions in listening to each other to get the work done for the American people.

Mr. President, I am deeply honored to serve in this body, and I thank you for your attention.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will re-

sume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

NOMINATION OF CYNTHIA VALENZUELA DIXON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

Born in Tucson, AZ, Judge Valenzuela earned her B.A. at the University of Arizona in 1991 and her J.D. at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Law in 1995. After graduating from law school, she worked as special assistant to Vice Chair Cruz Reynoso on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 1995 to 1998.

Between 1998 and 2000, Judge Valenzuela served as a trial attorney in the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. From 2000 to 2006, she served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California.

After that, Judge Valenzuela worked at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, first as the western regional counsel in 2006 and then as the national vice president and director of litigation from 2006 to 2011.

Between 2011 and 2016, Judge Valenzuela served as the Criminal Justice Act supervising attorney on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

Since 2016, Judge Valenzuela has served as a judge on the State Bar Court of California. She served as the supervising judge of that court from 2020 to 2022.

The American Bar Association rated Judge Valenzuela as "qualified," and her nomination is strongly supported by her home State Senators, Mr. PADILLA and Ms. BUTLER.

Judge Valenzuela's substantial litigation background and service on the State Bar Court of California have prepared her to serve as a district judge on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. I am proud to support her nomination.

VOTE ON DIXON NOMINATION

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, 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 West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.