

U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



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May 11, 2023

Dear Friends:

I would like to extend a warm welcome to those joining the American Friends of Georgia and the America-Georgia Business Council to celebrate the 91st anniversary of the Georgian Association in the United States and 105 years of Georgian independence. Over one century ago on May 26th, the Georgian people valiantly asserted their sovereignty from the Russian Empire and created a new democratic republic. While this newfound independence was fleeting, Georgia once again threw off its Soviet reins in 1991 and rightfully reasserted its sovereignty.

Since 1991, the United States has built a close partnership with the Georgian people. I applaud the nation's efforts over the past three decades to integrate into the global democratic community. As members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the U.S. and Georgia collaborate to advance global peace and security. Speaking as a friend of the Georgian people, there is still important work to be done to advance democratic reforms, promote freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, and work for equality for all Georgians. We are committed to working alongside our Georgian friends to strengthen anti-corruption initiatives and continue to deepen economic and political ties.

This evening I would like to take time to laud the work of the American Friends of Georgia in elevating the voices of the most vulnerable since 1994. Through facilitating young students' access to internet and education, designing the first full residential housing assistance community of its kind, and advancing much-needed hospice care programs, AFG has played a vital role in enhancing quality of life in Georgian communities. AFG has also done excellent work preserving the Georgian culture's beautiful heritage - including through the gorgeous calligraphy on display this evening. The Georgian-American community continues to make critical cultural, culinary, and socioeconomic contributions to our nation.

I wish you all the best for a wonderful reception honoring 105 years of Georgian independence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Cardin".

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator