

THOMAS V. MIKE MILLER, JR.
PRESIDENT EMERITUS
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
1987-2020
27th Legislative District



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

December 23, 2020

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The Honorable Bill Ferguson
H-107 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senate President Ferguson:

For more than a half century, it has been my privilege to serve the people of Maryland. During my 45 years in the Senate of Maryland, I served with so many Senators of integrity and commitment – men and women from all over the State who dedicated themselves to making our State a better place on behalf of our citizens. It is now with tremendous sadness that I must write to you today to inform you that my service will end, effective today. My heart and my mind remain strong, but my body has grown too weak to meet the demands of another legislative session.

As a student of history, in leaving the Senate in a time of national discord, I am reminded of some of the thoughts I shared with the Senate over the years. In another time of conflict and national reckoning, John F. Kennedy said “In a time of domestic crisis, people of goodwill and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics.”

It seems that a unity of purpose cannot be found in our Nation’s Capitol or in many places across our country and that in most instances, true compromise has become the enemy of elected officials. That lack of unity, inability to compromise, and belief that each political party can walk alone has a tremendous price – it leaves our citizenry cynical and angry and shakes their confidence in their government.

During my tenure in the Senate of Maryland and my time serving as President, it was the greatest honor of my life in large part because I have seen the Senate rise above partisan and other differences time and time again. I have seen the Senate come together and unite to get the work of the people of Maryland done. Most of my remarks on opening day concluded with the call to the Senate of “let’s get to work” because I knew that we could and would do so together.

We did not always agree – even with members of our own party – but we disagreed with dignity and congeniality and that is what made me so proud to be a part of the Senate of Maryland. I have full faith that spirit continues in the current leadership and that it will remain a part of the fabric of the Senate.

My priorities as an elected official began with my childhood growing up in southern Prince George's County, the oldest of 10 children. Our parents instilled in us a strong work ethic and a deep commitment to our community. My father ran a small business, and he taught us the power of hard work. He never let us forget that his customers were also our friends and neighbors, who often needed a helping hand. My mother was a teacher, and she taught us the importance of being a lifelong learner. She pushed me to pursue my education in the Prince George's County public schools, at the University of Maryland, College Park, and then the University of Maryland School of Law. She encouraged me to seek public office, and I might not have done so but for her.

I have always believed in the power of education to change people's lives and to grow our state's economy, which is why I was a relentless advocate for investments in public education during my tenure as President of the Maryland Senate. The monumental changes we made in the Bridge to Excellence program pushed \$3.3 billion more into our classrooms and helped to make Maryland's schools the best in the nation. Now, the state is once again prepared to take our schools to new heights, with increased tools for parents, children, and teachers, and tackling some of the decades long inequities that sadly still exist in our school system today. I was proud to vote for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future because education is the great equalizer. Those who share my belief in the power of education must continue to fight for these kinds of critical investments in our schools.

It was indeed an honor to represent the residents of the 27th legislative district for 50 years, and I hope their lives are better and their neighborhoods are stronger as a result of my service. While I was elected to represent a district, over the years, I counseled my colleagues that they were not elected as local officials but they were State Senators who must see past jurisdictional boundaries, to understand the needs of the state and even if not popular, they should be prepared to support what is needed for the state as a whole. It is the difference between being a statesperson and a politician.

I would be remiss now if I did not also thank my greatest loves, my wife Patti Miller and my family. Patti and my children sacrificed countless hours of my absence as I was in Annapolis during Session or attending other events in the interim. Patti is the backbone of our family and has supported me in too many ways to name over the years. Our children and grandchildren will certainly be the greatest legacy that Patti and I can leave to this world.

As I leave the Senate and public service, there are many things that could be said but none better than the words of George Washington when he resigned his commission in our Maryland State House in 1783, and told the Continental Congress:

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my Official life, by commending the Interests of our dearest Country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendance of them, to his holy keeping. Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of Action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this August body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my Commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.

I must now retire from the august body of the Senate of Maryland and take my leave of public life. I bid an affectionate farewell to you all and it is my greatest hope that our Almighty God bless and protect you, your families, our Nation, and our State. I pray that future generations in the Maryland General Assembly will continue to come together in the spirit of public service and unity to once again get to work on behalf of the citizens of the great State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Miller, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.

A simple horizontal line drawn in black ink, likely a decorative flourish or a placeholder for a signature.