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Cardin, Wicker, Mikulski Lead Bipartisan Senate Celebration of the Star-Spangled Banner on Its 200th Anniversary

*Senate designates September 2014 through September 2015 as the "Year of
National Thanksgiving for 'The Star-Spangled Banner'"*

WASHINGTON – Led by Senators **Ben Cardin (D-Md.)**, **Roger Wicker (R-Miss.)**, and **Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)**, the U.S. Senate added its voice to the national celebration of the 200th anniversary of our national anthem with unanimous passage of a resolution (S. 550) commemorating the writing, designation and symbolism of the song. The Star-Spangled Banner was written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 after seeing the American flag raised high in the air above **Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland**, after the Americans withstood 25 hours of bombardment by the British Royal Navy. The song was officially designated as the American national anthem in 1931.

"'The Star-Spangled Banner' was written to celebrate American courage at a time when the torch of liberty looked as if it were about to be extinguished ... our national anthem has become an enduring symbol of "the land of the free and the home of the brave," **the resolution declares.**

In addition to drawing attention to the need to "educate young people and new citizens of the United States about the history and meaning of the national anthem," **the resolution** also expresses the "sense of the Senate that 'The Star-Spangled Banner' shall retain all current verses and remain our national anthem in perpetuity."

"As both a Marylander and an American, I am overcome with pride when I listen to the lyrics of 'The Star Spangled Banner.' Fort McHenry is one of our nation's crown jewels and the Battle of Baltimore was one of the most significant historical events in our Nation's history," **said Senator Cardin.** "As we celebrate the 200th Anniversary of our national anthem, a symbol of America's steadfast patriotism, I want to thank all those who have fought for and continue to courageously protect the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'"

"Our banner yet waves 200 years after Francis Scott Key wrote the words to our national anthem," **Senator Wicker said.** "The lyrics have inspired generations of Americans and remind us of those who have fought to keep our country free. During this bicentennial year, we should take this opportunity to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy each day."

"Some call the War of 1812 the forgotten war. I believe it was the war that forged our nation. As the United States entered the war, we were a loose collection of states. As we emerged from it, we were on the path to becoming a true nation," **Senator Mikulski said.** "During the Battle of Baltimore, the British bombed Fort McHenry for 25 consecutive hours. A young lawyer, Francis Scott Key, watched from a nearby ship where he was being held. When the smoke cleared that morning, he could still see the stars and stripes. He was so inspired that he wrote the lines of the song that later became our National Anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner. Fort McHenry has seen history and it has made history. I am so proud of the role that Baltimore and Fort McHenry has played in the shaping of our nation and our National Anthem."