

January 20, 2005

Dear Friends,

The inauguration of an American President is a quadrennial ritual of renewal. Whatever your politics, the ceremony celebrates a democracy that it is our duty to sustain. Your presence here tonight is a celebration of freedom as much as any black tie ball in Washington, DC.

We have a special role to play in this government...in our government. Today that role is even more clearly defined and more desperately needed. With all three branches of the federal government either controlled or largely influenced by one political party, it is WE, THE PEOPLE, who must provide the checks and balances that the founders placed as a cornerstone of our democracy.

WE, THE PEOPLE, must provide the vigilant oversight that our government needs to thrive.

WE, THE PEOPLE must make our voices heard and have our votes count.

WE, THE PEOPLE must commit ourselves anew to perform to the best of our abilities, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

As citizens, this is our duty. As Americans, this is our privilege. As progressives, this is our pledge.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress