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SENATOR CARDIN SAYS MARYLAND AND U.S. ECONOMY WILL BENEFIT FROM UNINTERRUPTED GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

“The middle of an economic crisis is not the time to stall government investments and stimulus”

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), a member of the Senate Budget Committee, praised Senate passage today of the *Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009* (H.R. 2638), which extends funding for the Federal Government through March 6, 2009. Senator Cardin voted for the bill, which passed the Senate 78-12. It passed the House of Representatives on Friday by a vote of 370-58. It now goes to the President for his signature.

“The continuing resolution the Senate has passed today is critically important to our national security, our economy, and the daily lives of every American. Marylanders can be reassured that despite our current economic crisis, monthly Social Security checks – a lifeline for millions of American seniors – will continue without interruption. Veterans will be paid for their service to our Nation. Our National Parks will remain open, air traffic controllers will remain at their stations, and all the other essential services that a great nation relies on each day will continue,” **Senator Cardin** said.

“Congress recognizes in this legislation the hard-working citizens across the region and across the country who devote their lives to public service as federal civilian employees, often putting their lives on the line for the benefit of us all. The included 3.9 percent pay raise – a full percent higher than President Bush offered in his budget – represents parity with the pay raise for military personnel and a strong acknowledgment of their service to country. It is a privilege for me to represent so many of these dedicated federal workers in the United States Senate.

“In these hard economic times, today’s legislation does more than simply guarantee the uninterrupted work of the U.S. Government; it actively invests in policies – like home heating assistance – that have a proven ability to stimulate the economy. It makes smart

investments in our nation's veterans and our national defense, especially our greatest asset: the brave men and women who serve in uniform.

“I am proud that this bill contains the resources necessary to provide Maryland's installations and communities with the tools and funding needed to implement the BRAC recommendations and improve the quality of life for military families. It also adds an additional \$4.1 billion to provide the highest quality care to our nation's wounded warriors. And it provides \$750 million for the National Guard and Reserve to make sure they have the tools and training they need to protect us at home and overseas.

“I am pleased that at this critical moment for the economy, we provide a major boost for domestic auto makers to retool for the next generation of high-efficiency cars and trucks. This investment will put millions of Americans back to work in the short run and help move us away from our dangerous dependence on foreign oil in the long-term as we shift to plug-in electrics, hydrogen power, and natural gas.

“This continuing resolution will allow the next President and the next Congress to imprint their priorities on federal investments and spending. I look forward to new leadership in the White House that's willing to do what it takes to grow our economy, make us energy secure, provide affordable and quality healthcare for all Americans, support our military and veterans, invest in education and our environment, restore the rule of law, and truly understand the many pressing issues that face Marylanders and people all around this great nation. Congress will be ready to move quickly to turn our country in the right direction.”

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