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SENATORS CARDIN AND MIKULSKI, GOVERNOR O'MALLEY ANNOUNCE FEDERAL AND STATE EDUCATION INVESTMENTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD), and **Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley** today met with Bowie State University students and administrators and other local elected officials to discuss steps they're taking on the national and state level to make higher education more affordable for American families.

Senators Cardin and Mikulski both worked to ensure the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* included substantial investments in education and that Maryland got its fair share. Maryland received more than \$1 billion for state education priorities through *ARRA*. *ARRA* makes key investments in programs designed to make college more affordable. Senator Cardin is a member of the Senate Budget Committee, which sets the annual funding priorities for the federal government. Senator Mikulski is a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee with oversight over national education policy, and a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"A college degree is critical for success in today's economy, but the route to a higher education is too often blocked by a lack of resources," **Senator Cardin** said. "It is a priority for this Congress to help America's students reach their greatest potential and that means doing all we can to ensure that every student who wants to attend college is never held back by financial constraints."

"Our middle class families are stretched and strained. They're worried about their jobs and health care costs. In this economy, they don't know how they can afford to send their kids to college. They need a government that is on their side," **Senator Mikulski** said. "Today I'm proud to stand with my Team Maryland colleagues and deliver good news: we are on your side. We're standing up for affordable access to the American dream and jobs today and jobs tomorrow. We've made key investments in the economic recovery package to make college more affordable. We will keep fighting for students who want access to higher education and the freedom to achieve the American dream."

"We are so fortunate in Maryland to have such a dynamic team representing us in the halls of the U.S. Capitol. Senators Mikulski and Cardin, Leader Hoyer and the entire Team Maryland

fight every day for the people of our State, and we are grateful for their dedication and hard work in Washington on our behalf," **Governor O'Malley** said. "Over the past two years, even in difficult economic conditions, we have continued to protect our shared priority of making quality, affordable higher education accessible to more Marylanders rather than fewer. By freezing in-state college tuition for the past three years, we have allowed the dream of a college education to become a reality for Maryland families for whom it may not have been possible otherwise."

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Lakisha Walker, a Bowie State University sophomore added, "I am honored to have this opportunity to talk with important state and national leaders who are working on our behalf to make college more affordable. With support from the state and Congress, students like me will be able to get through college with less debt and focus on starting our careers and contributing to our communities."

ARRA includes funding for the following programs designed to make college more affordable:

- **\$17 billion for PELL Grants**, increasing the maximum grant by \$500, from \$4,840 to \$5,350 a year. PELL grants help low-income students pay for tuition, fees and education expenses. More than 60,000 Maryland students, including 1,900 students at Bowie State, rely on PELL grants to pay for college.
- **\$13.8 billion for the college tax credit**, raising the tax credit from \$1,800 to \$2,500 to help families pay for college. Approximately 53,000 Maryland families are eligible for the college tax credit.
- **\$980 million for the federal work study program** to help students put themselves through college by working on-campus. Maryland received an extra \$3 million for the federal work study program.

Maryland received more than **\$1 billion for state education priorities through ARRA**. Governor O'Malley has announced that higher education will benefit from these funds, in addition to fully funding K-12 education statewide:

- **Freezing in-state tuition for the fourth straight year.** Contrary to the previous administration which hiked in-state college tuition over 40% in Maryland, the O'Malley-Brown Administration has held the line on college tuition, moving the state from the 6th most expensive college state in the nation to the 16th.
- **Increasing state aid to community colleges by 5% over the next two years.** The original FY10 budget proposal provided level funding for community colleges, but Governor O'Malley has allocated a 5% increase for FY10 and FY11 using ARRA funds.

In addition to direct investment provided through ARRA, the federal funds have allowed the state to maintain capital commitments in FY10, including **\$34 million for a Fine and Performing Arts Center at Bowie State University**.

Since the passage of the Thornton Bridge to Excellence Plan, State funding for local school systems has increased by \$1.97 billion dollars, a 76-percent increase. Governor O'Malley proposed a record \$5.4 billion funding level for FY10 despite difficult economic times. In

addition, for the first time ever, Maryland will have invested more than \$1 billion in school construction funding over a three year period, including over \$260 million proposed for FY10 alone.

In early January, Education Week Magazine ranked Maryland's public schools number one in the nation. Shortly thereafter, the College Board ranked Maryland's high schools number one in the nation for Advanced Placement participation and achievement. In addition, the Princeton Review named four Maryland institutions among the nation's "best values."

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