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CONTACT:
Susan Sullam (410-962-4436)

SENATOR CARDIN PRAISES COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF FY2010 BUDGET

Budget Committee Adopts Two Cardin Amendments

WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), a member of the Senate Budget Committee, today praised committee passage of the FY 2010 budget resolution, saying *“this budget represents a huge step forward because it sets new priorities for our nation that will enable us to lessen our dependence on foreign energy, reduce health care costs and increase access to education.”*

The Senate Budget Committee unanimously adopted two amendments that were offered by Senator Cardin. The first, also co-sponsored by **Senator John Ensign** (R-NV), would create a reserve fund making it easier to ultimately eliminate the arbitrary caps on Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy services performed outside a hospital setting. The caps were first enacted in 1997.

The Committee also approved a Cardin amendment that would increase the funding level for the Small Business Administration (SBA) by \$180 million to \$880 million for FY 2010. The Senator, who also is a member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, said: *“The SBA has suffered severe budget cutbacks over the past eight years, and my amendment will ensure that the SBA has the resources to provide small businesses with the financial and technical assistance they need to weather these difficult economic times.”*

Senator Cardin, who also chairs the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee of the Environment and Public Works Committee, co-sponsored an amendment incorporating protections for oceans and coastal areas, including the Great Lakes, into a deficit-neutral reserve fund to support increased investment in renewable energy, green jobs and environmental preservation.

“The FY 2010 budget passed in committee today is a blueprint for strengthening our economy, investing in America and reversing the disastrous policies of the past eight years. It protects the major priorities in President Obama’s budget and defines our key spending initiatives for the coming year. The budget lays the foundation for fixing our broken health care system, eliminating our dependence on foreign energy, and improving our schools, while also reducing the burgeoning deficit that President Obama inherited.”

“Our nation faces tremendous challenges, and I am particularly proud of my amendments that will help to reset America’s priorities and put us on a path to restore us to economic health. I look forward to further debate on the budget with my colleagues on the Senate floor.”

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