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## **SENATOR CARDIN: PRESIDENT BUSH'S BUDGET SHORT-CHANGES MARYLANDERS**

WASHINGTON – Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), issued the following statement in response to the President's FY2009 Budget Proposal released earlier today:

“The President's budget embraces a very different set of priorities from the majority of Americans. It short-changes Maryland and short-changes America. His budget does little to help middle-class Americans or restore confidence in the long-term health of the American economy. He wants to make tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans permanent, while cutting services for those who need the most help. His budget would burden our children with mountains of debt while hiding the cost of his endless commitment to the war in Iraq.

“Marylanders would be hurt by the President's budget. Our families are struggling to pay their mortgages, fill their gas tanks and pay doctors bills but the President's proposal freezes or cuts programs for education, healthcare, the environment, and veterans. Once again, he fails to fully fund *No Child Left Behind*, leaving our children at risk. But he continues to promote a program of vouchers that would draw \$300 million away from our public schools. And he continues to push forward his plan to privatize Social Security and reduce benefits despite repeated rejections by Congress and the American people.

“Close to home, we in Maryland understand the vital role federal employees have in providing services that help, support and protect Americans nationwide. After seven years, I would have hoped that the President would have learned the hard lesson of recruiting and retaining quality public servants. Yet his budget leaves federal employees in Maryland and elsewhere without adequate budget support.

“Restoration efforts for the Chesapeake Bay, a national treasure, would be cut by more than \$15 million if the President's budget were enacted. Funds for activities ranging from cleaning up our wastewater treatment plants to restoring vital oysters and wetlands would be slashed or eliminated. The President's budget also guts essential services for America at a time when we need to invest in the healthcare needs for today and tomorrow. He would slash \$200 billion over

five years from Medicare and Medicaid funding, including payments to hospitals, nursing homes and physician training. And for the fifth year in a row, he would provide no increases for cutting edge research at the National Institutes of Health.

“Thankfully, the President’s budget is not set in stone. This is just the opening for future negotiations with Congress. As a member of the Budget Committee, I will work to create an effective budget package that restores funding for veterans, education, healthcare and energy programs that benefit the middle class and our most vulnerable citizens.

“Unlike the President, my colleagues and I will develop a complete budget that does not hide costs, like the war in Iraq or a fix to the Alternative Minimum Tax. We will base our calculations on sound economic principles and seek to lower the debt rather than conceal it. The American public deserves no less.”

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