



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 3, 2009

CONTACT:
Sue Walitsky (Cardin) 202-224-4524
Cassie Harvey (Mikulski) 202-228-1122

COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS PRESENT PRIORITIES TO MARYLAND'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

WASHINGTON, DC – Maryland's U.S. Senators and Congressional Delegation gathered today for an update on Maryland's Community Colleges and to hear from educators about the latest initiatives they are undertaking to prepare Maryland's future workforce during these difficult economic times. Community College presidents attending the meeting highlighted the role they play in filling critical workforce shortages like health care and the need for increases in federal financial aid, direct-lending to students, capital construction funds to help accommodate their growing student populations, and other priority concerns.

President Obama has taken steps to support community colleges as they provide important training for students looking for a cost-effective education, as well as displaced workers and others seeking training for new careers. One of every 13 workers in Maryland attends a community college to help get ahead in their careers or receive retraining to embark on a new career.

"In the current economic climate, more and more students are becoming acutely aware of the significant value of attending a community college where tuition rates are, on average, less than half that of a four year institution," **said Senator Cardin**, who chaired the delegation meeting today. "Maryland's Community Colleges enhance that value with their unique ability to respond quickly to the changing workforce needs of the community to provide programs that are relevant in today's marketplace."

"I believe community colleges are the gateway to the future for first time students looking for an affordable college education and for mid-career students looking to get ahead in the workplace," **said Senator Mikulski**, Chair of the Maryland delegation, and a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. "I know firsthand the vital role they play in our communities – their low cost, convenient location and open door admissions policy have made them a critical tool for preparing people for the jobs of tomorrow and retraining people for jobs today. I will keep fighting in the Senate to do all I can to support our community colleges."

Testifying before the Maryland delegation today were Dr. Kathleen Herrington, President of Howard Community College; Dr. Carolane Williams, President of Baltimore City Community College; and Dr. W. Stephen Pannill, President of Cecil Community College and president of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges. Representatives of more than a dozen other Maryland Community Colleges also attended the delegation meeting.

Maryland's 16 community colleges enroll 47% of the state's college students, with nearly half attending Anne Arundel Community College, Montgomery College or the Community College of Baltimore County. The average cost of tuition and fees at a Maryland Community College is just \$3, 254, versus an average of \$8,053 for a four-year state college or university.

###