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CONTACT: Susan Sullam, 410-962-4436

May 7, 2009

## ***CARDIN CALLS PASSAGE OF SENATE HOUSING BILL “A STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION” IN HELPING PREVENT FORECLOSURES AND PROTECT RENTERS***

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) today praised Senate passage of the *Helping Families Save Their Homes Act*, S. 896, calling it “another important step” in helping prevent foreclosures and increase the availability of credit for consumers and businesses. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 91 to 5, which will go to a conference committee to work out differences with a similar House measure.

“Every community in this nation is dealing with the trauma and aftermath of the housing crisis as homeowners and renters face foreclosure or the threat of losing their homes,” said Senator Cardin, a member of the Senate Budget Committee. “I strongly supported this bill because it will provide homeowners and lenders with new tools to combat foreclosures and to make it easier for families to stay in their homes.”

Since the first quarter of 2008, there has been a 24% increase in the foreclosure rate nationwide in the last year. In Maryland, there were 9,289 foreclosure filings in the first quarter of 2009, which means one in every 250 households was in some stage of foreclosure. The Senate-passed bill would provide more tools to borrowers and banks to help prevent foreclosures and makes it easier for homeowners and loan servicers to use those tools. The legislation also includes important new protections for renters who are facing eviction because their landlord is in foreclosure.

The *Helping Families Save Their Homes Act* includes provisions that would:

- **Expand Access To The HOPE For Homeowners (H4H) Program.** Updates the H4H program to make it more user-friendly and effective, including: lowering fees; streamlining borrower certification requirements; banning millionaires from the program; and allowing for incentive payments to servicers and originators to participate in the program.
- **Increase Funding For Foreclosure Prevention Efforts By \$130 Million.** Includes an additional \$130 million for foreclosure prevention efforts including

counseling, additional fair housing field employees, and educating the public about foreclosure scams.

- **Establish Protections for Renters Living in Foreclosed Homes.** Provides new protections for renters by requiring the bank that forecloses on a home that is a rental property honor the existing lease, or, for renters on month-to-month leases, provide a minimum of 90 days notice. If the bank sells the property to an owner-occupant, 90-days notice would be required. The bill provides parallel protections to section-8 tenants.
- **Provide Comprehensive New Resources for Homeless Americans.** Consolidates homeless programs to improve effectiveness and streamline administration. It focuses resources on the fastest growing segment of the homeless population – families with children – as well as the chronically homeless. It also authorizes \$2.2 billion for homeless programs.

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