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March 20, 2009

SENATOR CARDIN THANKS MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES

BETHESDA – U.S. Senator **Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), today paid tribute to 54 Montgomery County public safety employees who have exhibited outstanding dedication and service at the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Public Safety Luncheon.

“I want to thank all of the police officers, firefighters, correctional officers and public safety officials here today for their tremendous commitment to the residents of Montgomery County,” said Senator Cardin. “First responders have always been on the front lines, keeping our families and our neighborhoods safe from harm. They are the true heroes in our communities, risking their lives every day.”

Senator Cardin is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Homeland Security and Terrorism Subcommittee. He stressed that the recently passed ***American Reinvestment and Recovery Act*** contains needed funding to help states retain and hire law enforcement officials. The bill, which was signed into law by President Obama on February 17th, includes \$2 billion for state and local law enforcement assistance through the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, and \$1 billion for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program to hire additional police officers.

“These funds will be critical to our first responders, particularly during this economic downturn when states and communities are finding it hard to sustain budgets,” said Senator Cardin, who also is a member of the Senate Budget Committee.

The Senator also said that the 2009 Homeland Security appropriations bill contained \$4.2 billion for the First Responder Grant Programs, which has had a tremendous impact on Montgomery County. In 2008, the Department of Homeland Security’s Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) gave nearly \$1.3 million to the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service to purchase new interoperable communications equipment. This grant program also gave the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department \$600,000 to purchase a new fire engine.

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