



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2009

**** Video Feed Instructions Below**

CONTACT:

Sue Walitsky 202-224-4524 or
202-320-0819 (cell)

CARDIN JOINS BALTIMORE STUDENTS, CATS AND DOGS IN SUPPORT FOR “NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE” ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

WASHINGTON, DC – In an effort to strengthen environmental education in America’s classrooms and reconnect more kids with nature, **U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, Jack Reed (D-RI), Dick Durbin (D-IL), , and U.S. Representative John P. Sarbanes (D-MD) today joined with students from the **Green School in Baltimore**, conservationists from the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation** and the **National Aquarium in Baltimore**, and animal ambassadors from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, to unveil the *No Child Left Inside Act of 2009*. This bipartisan legislation would authorize \$500 million over five years for school systems around the country to build environmental literacy, strengthen teacher training, and provide competitive grants to help schools and non-profits pay for outdoor education.

Studies show that when you get kids outside and teach them about nature, it helps them raise achievement in other subjects and has important health benefits too. Yet the amount of time children now spend outdoors has declined 50 percent in the past 20 years. Today, many schools are being forced to scale back environmental programs and curtail outdoor activities.

“Environmental literacy is essential for life in the 21st century. No Child Left Inside will provide students with the knowledge and experience they need to grow up healthy in a sustainable world with strong respect, concern and understanding of the eco-system in which they live,” said **Senator Benjamin L. Cardin**, Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee. “This bill represents a critical investment in the future of our nation and the children who will be responsible for answering the most critical questions of our time.”

“We must educate our youth to be environmental stewards and grow the next generation of scientists and innovators to solve our energy and environmental challenges,” said **Congressman John Sarbanes**. “By preparing the next generation to meet these challenges, we will accomplish environmental, economic and national security policy objectives in one fell swoop.”

“The National Aquarium and the other members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums have seen children transformed by experiencing nature. These connections pique kids’ curiosity and create lasting enthusiasm for this world they will inherit. We know that hands-on outdoor education works because we see our kids coming back each year wanting to learn more,” stated **David M. Pittenger**, Executive Director of the National Aquarium Institute.

The *No Child Left Inside Act* authorizes new funding for states to provide high-quality, environmental instruction. Funds would support outdoor learning activities both at school and in non-formal environmental education centers, teacher professional development, and the creation of state environmental literacy plans.

There are currently 13 cosponsors of the Senate bill (S. 866), authored by Reed: Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), Susan Collins (R-ME), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), John Kerry (D-MA), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), Robert Menendez, Patty Murray (D-WA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). There are currently 53 cosponsors of the House bill (H.R. 2054), authored by Sarbanes.

The legislation has key backing from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the No Child Left Inside (NCLI) Coalition, a broad-based organization which includes 1,300 organizational members from across the United States—representing more than 50 million individuals. For more information about the NCLI Coalition, visit: www.NCLICoalition.org.

##

VIDEO FOOTAGE AVAILABLE ON PATHFIRE DMG

For more instructions, see the attached or visit democrats.senate.gov/tv/pathfire/cardin.pdf

1. On the left side of the Pathfire/DMG main page, click on **Video News Feed (Master VNF Locator)**
2. From the expanded list, double-click on **VNF Provider B**
3. Click the **U.S. Senate** tab
4. Locate and click (MD2) **MD, Cardin**. The link to the video will be displayed in the pane on the right (**MD-Cardin-No Child Left Inside**)

B-ROLL FOOTAGE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- **Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**
- **K-5th grade students from the Green School in Baltimore**, an innovative public charter school that specializes in environmental education
- A few of Jack Hanna's animal friends from the Columbus Zoo, including: **Toddy the Palm Civet**; **Bonita the Three-banded Armadillo**; and a **Serval Cat** from Africa

Summary of the No Child Left Inside Act of 2009

Title I – Environmental Literacy Plans

To qualify for environmental education grant programs authorized by this legislation, each state must develop and submit a comprehensive environmental literacy plan for prekindergarten, elementary, and secondary school students. The plan's objectives would be to establish a statewide framework for: (1) preparing students to analyze major environmental issues facing the United States; (2) providing field-based experiences as part of the school curriculum; and (3) creating opportunities for environmental education-based professional development for teachers. The state plan must be peer-reviewed and approved by the United States Secretary of Education. Every 2 years, states must submit a report to the Secretary on implementation of the environmental literacy plan.

The legislation would authorize \$100 million each year for FY2010 through FY2014 for states to implement their approved environmental literacy plan. Up to seventy percent of the funding would be allocated for states to competitively award to school districts and eligible partnerships to support activities that implement the literacy plan. At least 30 percent of the funding would pass through states to local school districts and eligible partnerships for professional development of teachers (under Title II below).

Title II – Establishes Environmental Education Professional Development Grant Programs

The legislation would create a new professional development initiative to ensure that teachers possess the content knowledge and pedagogical skills to effectively teach environmental education in the classroom, including the use of innovative interdisciplinary and field-based learning strategies. An eligible partnership must include a local school district, and may include: an institution of higher education; another school district; a public elementary or secondary school or consortium of schools; or federal, state, regional, or local environmental or natural resources agencies or nonprofit organizations with demonstrated effectiveness in improving the quality of environmental education teachers. This initiative is modeled on the current Math and Science Partnerships program in Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Title III – Environmental Education Grant Program to Build National Capacity

The legislation would also authorize a new competitive grant program in Title V of ESEA to initiate, expand, or improve environmental education curriculum and programs at the state and national level. Partnerships must include at least one local school district and may include educational or environmental departments at institutions of higher education; state environmental and natural resource agencies; and nonprofit organizations. Activities would include disseminating information about successful model environmental education programs, and conducting rigorous national studies on the effectiveness of environmental education on improving student academic achievement and behavior.