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***SENATE PASSES RESOLUTION HONORING
NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE ON 40TH ANNIVERSARY***
Cardin Lead Democratic Sponsor of Resolution

WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) today praised the National Eye Institute (NEI) on its 40th anniversary, calling it “*one of the most important research facilities in our nation devoted to blindness and low vision.*” The U.S. Senate unanimously passed a Resolution honoring the NEI and designating 2011 through 2020 as the “Decade of Vision” as a way to increase public awareness about blindness and vision-related diseases.

The National Eye Institute (NEI) was created by Congress in 1968. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and is the federal government's lead agency for vision research.

*“Americans spend more than \$68 billion a year on problems associated with vision loss,” said **Senator Cardin**, who was the lead Democratic sponsor of the measure. “Today, approximately 38 million Americans are affected by blindness, low vision or age-related eye disease and this number is expected to grow to 50 million by 2020 as baby boomers approach old age.*

“NEI research has resulted in sight-saving treatments, reduced visual impairment and blindness, and has improved the quality of life for people of all ages. NEI-supported research has advanced our knowledge of vision related diseases, allowing us to make great strides in prevention and treatment.”

Vision research is supported by the NEI through approximately 1,600 research grants and training awards made to scientists at more than 250 medical centers, hospitals, universities, and other institutions across the country and around the world. The NEI also conducts laboratory and patient-oriented research at its own facilities located on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a similar resolution in June

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