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SENATOR CARDIN VOTES TO SUPPORT GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIV/AIDS, OTHER DISEASES

WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), today voted for the *President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Reauthorization Act, S. 2731*, which would provide \$50 billion in funding over five years to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria throughout the world. The bill, which enjoys strong bipartisan support, passed the Senate by a vote of 80 to 16.

“The AIDS epidemic has taken an unbelievable toll on the families, children and parents who have lived with the destruction and suffering of this disease,” said **Senator Cardin**, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and co-chair of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. “It has had a particularly devastating effect on Sub-Saharan Africa, where some 22.5 million people are infected with the virus, and where it is estimated 11.4 million children have lost one or both parents.”

Created in 2003, PEPFAR was originally funded at \$15 billion, which, at the time, made it the single largest bi-lateral program to address the disease. S. 2731 would require the President to establish a five-year strategy to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. It also would intensify prevention, treatment, and care programs and include groups particularly vulnerable to the disease, such as women and young girls. Additionally it would boost funding for research, public-private partnerships and reinforce vaccine development.

The measure also includes Senator Cardin's amendment to build the capacity of African education and training institutions to better prepare health workers for service in the community by increasing the technological and research capacity of these institutions.

“As the PEPFAR program matures, my hope is that it will substantially increase the number of African health workers engaged in the effort to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS,” said **Senator Cardin**.

It also includes the Cardin amendment to include American land grant colleges and universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in programs to increase the technological and teaching capacity of African professional institutions to prepare their students for careers in public health.

“As the United States further engages in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, I believe sustainability and African leadership are imperative to ensure a full and respectful partnership and one that will be mutually beneficial to America and the states of Sub-Saharan Africa.”

