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CARDIN SHARES DETAILS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITH MONTGOMERY SENIORS

Bethesda, MD – U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Budget Committee, today addressed the Montgomery County’s Senior Forum “*Security for Seniors in an Uncertain Time*,” reassuring attendees that they will not be left out of America’s economic recovery.

“Living on a fixed income is difficult in the best of times, but in today's economy, it is an absolute challenge,” said Senator Cardin. “No one has been more directly harmed by the plummeting stock market and drop in home values more than our seniors who have watched the value of their greatest sources of income dissipate in the last year. President Obama and Congress understand this fact, which is we are doing all we can to help seniors survive these tough economic times.

“Everything we do to stabilize the housing market, reduce foreclosures and restore confidence in our financial markets has a positive impact on our seniors and helps to rebuild their savings. For those receiving Social Security benefits, the most immediate help they will see from the recently passed *American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act* is a cash payment – \$250 for individuals and \$500 for couples who both receive some Social Security benefit. Recipients won’t have to fill out a tax return – or do anything. They will get the money either through direct deposit or a check in the mail; however they receive their Social Security payments.

“In addition to increases in Medicaid funding and programs for low-income housing, America’s seniors will benefit from the following provisions in the **FY2009 Omnibus** bill:

- \$2.2 billion for **Community Health Centers**, which is \$125 million above last year’s funding, providing 470,000 additional uninsured Americans with access to care.
- \$45 million to help seniors understand what **Medicare benefits** are available to them.
- \$10.5 billion for the **Social Security Administration**, \$709 million above 2008 funding levels, to help address the unacceptable backlog of disability claims.
- \$1.7 billion for the **Social Services Block Grant** program to help States assist their most vulnerable.

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- \$700 million for the **Community Services Block Grant** program to support safety-net services at the community level for 16 million individuals.
- \$810 million to provide seniors with **decent meals**. This is \$46 million above last year so that 14 million additional meals can be served.
- \$30 billion for critical, lifesaving research at the **National Institutes of Health** (NIH). This appropriation is \$938 million above last year's funding, allowing NIH to capitalize on unprecedented scientific opportunities with almost 10,600 new grants.

“We need to get credit flowing again. We need to put Americans back to work. We need to educate our young people and reform our healthcare system. We need to become energy independent and tackle climate change. We need to keep restore our leadership around the world and keep Americans safe from terrorism. Amidst all this, we will fulfill our obligation to protect and support our seniors, and our most vulnerable citizens, as we steer our nation toward economic recovery.”

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