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September 11, 2008

## **CARDIN, SNOWE ANNOUNCE PROGRESS ON RELIEF FOR VOLUNTEERS AS HOUSE WAYS & MEANS MEMBERS INTRODUCE COMPANION LEGISLATION**

*Fair Deal for Volunteers Act Aims to Lessen Pain at the Gas Pump*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) and **Olympia Snowe** (R-ME) lauded **Congressmen John Lewis (D-GA)** and **Jim Ramstad (R-MN)**, Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight, for introducing companion legislation to the Cardin-Snowe *Fair Deal for Volunteers Act of 2008* (S. 3246), which would provide relief to volunteers who use their personal vehicles for charitable activities. Under current law, mileage rates for charitable activity is fixed under the Internal Revenue Code at just 14 cents per mile, while the average cost of a gallon of regular gas has more than doubled in the last eight years and far outpaces the deduction limits.

“Americans continue to feel the pain in their wallet every time they fill up their gas tank, but this has not diminished our volunteer spirit or desire to help others,” said **Senator Cardin**. “I congratulate Chairman Lewis and Ranking Member Ramstad on taking a key role in bringing relief to so many volunteers across the country. As the state of our economy worsens and the need to help the most vulnerable in our community increases, we recognize that our charitable organizations and volunteers are feeling the pain too. Congress has a responsibility to act so that the IRS can increase mileage rates for charitable volunteers to reflect our current economic climate.”

“I applaud House Ways and Means Committee Members John Lewis and Jim Ramstad on their initiative to push in the House companion legislation to the *Fair Deal for Volunteers Act*,” **Senator Snowe** said. “Congressman Lewis and Ramstad have built on our legislation that will encourage charitable acts with provisions that will allow volunteers to be reimbursed directly up to the business rate and will ensure that the charitable rate is set no lower than the medical expenses rate. I support these provisions that build on the efforts of Senator Cardin and myself and look forward to seeing the charity community benefit from our legislation.”

The *Fair Deal for Volunteers Act* would not set a specific rate but would provide the IRS with flexibility in setting the mileage rate for charitable work, volunteers and organizations. Currently, the IRS is able to increase the deduction amount for medical, moving and business expenses to reflect current economic conditions because the rate is not written into the law.

The *Fair Deal for Volunteers Act* was introduced on July 10, 2008 by Senators Cardin and Snowe. Current co-sponsors include Senators Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD); Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Patrick Leahy (D-VT); Orrin Hatch (R-UT); Norm Coleman (R-MN); John Warner (R-VA); and Chuck Grassley, Ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee. The Senate bill has been read twice and referred to the Finance Committee.

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