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CONTACT: Susan Sullam (Cardin) 410-962-4436

Cassie Harvey (Mikulski), 202-228-1122

Jan. 13, 2009

SENATORS CARDIN AND MIKULSKI INTRODUCE BILL IN 111TH CONGRESS TO HONOR HARRIET TUBMAN'S LIFE ON EASTERN SHORE AND IN NEW YORK

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD) today joined **Senators Charles Schumer** and **Hillary Rodham Clinton** (both D-NY) in introducing legislation in the 111th Congress to honor the life of Harriet Ross Tubman, the most famous “conductor” of the anti-slavery resistance network known as the Underground Railroad. The Senators originally introduced the bill in the 110th Congress in July 2008.

The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act will establish two parks, one in Maryland and one in New York. The National Historical Park in Maryland will trace Tubman’s early life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she was born and later escaped from slavery to become one of the leaders on the Underground Railroad. The National Historical Park in New York will be located in Auburn and will focus on her later years where she was active in the suffrage movement and in providing for the welfare of aged African Americans.

Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester County, Maryland, where she spent nearly 30 years as a slave. She escaped slavery in 1849, but returned for more than 10 years to Dorchester and Caroline counties where she led hundreds of African Americans to freedom. Known as “Moses” by African-American and white abolitionists, she reportedly never lost a “passenger” on the Underground Railroad.

“Harriet Tubman was a true American patriot, for whom liberty and freedom were not just concepts,” said **Senator Cardin**. “She lived those principles and shared that freedom with hundreds of others. These two parks will make it possible for Marylanders and the entire nation to trace her life’s work and remember all that she was able to accomplish.”

“Harriet Tubman was a courageous fighter who delivered 300 slaves to freedom on her Underground Railroad and was tireless in her commitment to fight for those who could not fight for themselves. Her life continues to inspire me,” said **Senator Mikulski**. “That’s why I am proud to cosponsor legislation that will honor, preserve and protect her legacy.”

In Maryland, The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park would include historically important landscapes in Dorchester, Caroline and Talbot counties that are

evocative of the life of Harriet Tubman. The Maryland properties include about 2,200 acres in Caroline County that comprise the Poplar Neck plantation that Tubman escaped from in 1849. The 725 acres of viewshed across the Choptank River in Talbot County would also be included in the Park. In Dorchester County, the parcels would not be contiguous, but would include about 2,775 acres. All of them are included within the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge boundaries or abut that resource land. The National Park Service would not own any of these lands.

In New York, The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park would include important historical structures in Auburn, New York. They include Tubman's home, the Home for the Aged that she established, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, and the Fort Hill Cemetery where she is buried.

"This legislation will make the Harriet Tubman house in Auburn a must-see place for all those interested in American History and greatly enhance our regional tourism industry. Auburn is steeped in the history of one of our Nation's greatest liberators, Harriet Tubman. For a long time, it's been up to a dedicated few to preserve her memory and keep the community's history of tolerance and service alive. Now, this legislation will provide great help in those efforts by bringing both federal money and expertise to the rich and varied Harriet Tubman sites in the region," said **Senator Schumer**.

"Harriet Tubman exemplified strength and courage in the face of overwhelming odds, and gave hope to those who had lived a life of oppression," said **Senator Clinton**. "This bill gives us the opportunity to pay tribute to Harriet Tubman's commitment to expanding the American ideals of equality and freedom, and reflect on the progress that could not have been made without her sacrifices. By memorializing her life here in New York we are preserving an important piece of our national history and ensuring that her legacy will serve to educate future generations for years to come."

The bill authorizes \$11 million in grants for both Maryland and New York. In Maryland, funds can be used for the construction of the Harriet Tubman State Park Visitors Center and for easements or acquisition of properties inside or adjacent to the Historical Park boundaries. In New York, funds can be used for the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of the Auburn properties.

Finally, the bill also authorizes a new grant program. Under the program, the National Park Service would award competitive grants to historically Black colleges and universities, predominately Black institutions, and minority serving institutions for research into the life of Harriet Tubman and the African-American experience during the years that coincide with the life of Harriet Tubman. The legislation authorizes \$200,000 annually for this scholarship program.

The bill was originally introduced late in the 110th Congress, but Congress adjourned before it could act on the measure. The bill is being introduced in the first days of the 111th Congress because it is a priority for the Maryland and New York senators. U.S. Congressman Michael Arcuri (D-NY) will introduce a companion bill in the House of Representatives.

