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Grassley's Red Cross Modernization Bill Passes Full Senate

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley's legislation to modernize the management structure of the American Red Cross today passed the full Senate as part of legislation implementing 9-11 commission recommendations.

"The Red Cross does a very good job," Grassley said. "It can do an even better job with some simple management improvements. The Red Cross is responsive to changes and ways to become more accountable to the American people. I hope Congress will fulfill its responsibility to deliver these reforms."

Last Thursday, the Judiciary Committee approved Grassley's *American National Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007* (S. 655) on a voice vote.

The bill amends the Red Cross' congressional charter with regard to the Board of Governors' responsibilities, selection process and term limits. It also would allow some oversight by the U.S. comptroller general and establish an ombudsman's office, which would be required to submit an annual report to Congress.

The reforms – such as reducing the size of the Red Cross' board – must be legislated because the group is congressionally chartered. An independent advisory group commissioned by the Red Cross recommended the changes; the Red Cross is working closely with Grassley and his fellow legislators to see the changes enacted. Grassley said he hopes for final congressional approval as soon as possible.

Grassley's bill has 13 bipartisan co-sponsors: Sen. Daniel Akaka, (D-HI), Sen. Sherrod Brown, (D-OH), Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), Sen. John Cornyn, (R-TX), Sen. Elizabeth Dole, (R-NC), Sen. Michael Enzi, (R-WY), Sen. Russell Feingold, (D-WI), Sen. Johnny Isakson, (R-GA), Sen. Edward Kennedy, (D-MA), Sen. Mary Landrieu, (D-LA), Sen. Joseph Lieberman, (ID-CT), Sen. Mel Martinez, (R-FL), and Sen Nelson, Bill (D-FL).

Grassley continues to conduct a wide-ranging review of non-profit practices to build accountability to taxpayers and donors for the generous tax exemption non-profit groups receive.

