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Grassley's Red Cross Modernization Effort Receives Final Passage, Heads to President

WASHINGTON – A nearly identical version of Sen. Chuck Grassley's bipartisan legislation to modernize the management structure of the American Red Cross last night received final passage by the full Senate and now heads to the President for his expected signature.

"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'm glad Congress has fulfilled its responsibility to deliver these reforms."

Last month, the full Senate approved Grassley's *American National Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007* (S. 655). Last night, the Senate approved the nearly identical House-passed version of the bill, the *American National Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007* (H.R. 1681), on a voice vote. The House followed Grassley's lead on Red Cross reform legislation.

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

The reforms – such as reducing the size of the Red Cross' board – had to be legislated because the group is congressionally chartered. An independent advisory group commissioned by the Red Cross recommended the changes; the Red Cross worked closely with Grassley and his fellow legislators to see the changes enacted.

Grassley's bill had 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.