

# Press Release

**Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin**

**Wisconsin's Second District**



2446 Rayburn H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-2906  
Fax: 202-225-6942

10 E. Doty St. #405  
Madison, WI 53703  
Phone: 608-258-9800  
Fax: 608-258-9808

400 E. Grand Ave. #402  
Beloit, WI 53511  
Phone: 608-362-2800  
Fax: 608-362-2838

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Contact: Jerilyn Goodman 608-251-8737 Cell: 608-347-6557  
[jerilyn.goodman@mail.house.gov](mailto:jerilyn.goodman@mail.house.gov)

June 16, 2009

## **House Recognizes 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NEI *Declares 2010-2020 "Decade of Vision"***

The House today passed H.Res. 366, recognizing the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Eye Institute (NEI) and expressing support for designating 2010 through 2020 as the "Decade of Vision." The resolution was introduced by Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), joined by Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX).

"Ensuring eye-health, preventing blindness, and preserving vision are concerns of all Americans," said Congresswoman Baldwin. "Eye disease is a significant public health problem. Between 2010 and 2020, it's estimated that the number of people over age 40 who experience blindness, low vision, and age-related eye disease will grow from 38 million to 50 million. NEI's leadership in directing vision research over the next decade will be more important than ever," Baldwin said.

The NEI estimates that eye disease and vision impairment currently cost the nation \$68 billion annually in healthcare costs, lost productivity, reduced independence, diminished quality of life, and accelerated mortality.

The NEI leads national efforts to prevent blindness and to preserve and restore vision. NEI has conducted more than 60 clinical trials resulting in treatments and therapies that save sight and, in some cases, actually reverse vision loss. The NEI is supporting research developed by Madison, WI-based Wicab, Inc. that helps blind people see. As featured in the Wisconsin State Journal on May 17, 2009, BrainPort uses a camera mounted on a person's head to send electronic signals to a monitor on the tongue that sends visual cues to the brain.

"The National Eye Institute has been the driving force behind the major advances in vision-saving basic science and clinical research for the last four decades, and will continue to be so in the future. Congresswoman Baldwin deserves our gratitude for her unflagging support of the NEI, and for the resolutions commemorating its creation and recognizing the Decade of Vision," said Dr. Paul Kaufman, Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, former President and Executive Vice-President for the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) and now Editor of its journal IOVS – *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science*.

###