

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today secured final House approval of a provision he helped author as part of the fiscal year 2010 Defense Appropriations bill that effectively blocks the Pentagon from moving forward with plans that could have led to the privatization of thousands of jobs at various military installations across the country. Due to pressure from Hinchey and others, the Army last month abandoned plans to privatize 531 public works and custodial jobs at West Point and instead maintained them as government positions. While Hinchey's measure was no longer needed in the case of West Point, thousands of other jobs would have remained at risk without passage of the provision Hinchey helped write.

Hinchey, with the assistance of Congressman John Hall (D-NY), helped push the provision through the House in July, but the Senate did not include similar language in its version of the bill. As House and Senate leaders worked to reconcile the differences in the two versions of the bill, Hinchey was able to convince Senate leaders to go along with the provisions in the House version in order to prevent the thousands of jobs from being privatized through a process known as Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76 privatization reviews. The Senate is expected to pass the final version of the defense bill in the coming days.

"The passage of this bill closes the book on a misguided policy that was exploited by the Bush administration in an attempt to privatize thousands of government jobs," Hinchey said. "Those jobs are safe now and we no longer need to worry about private companies coming in and offering workers lower salaries with little or no benefits while their executives make a fortune. The men and women who wake up each day focused on helping our military operations run smoothly should be thanked for their hard work and commitment. By passing this measure we in the Congress are expressing that much-deserved gratitude and thanks by ensuring that they will continue to have the jobs to which they are so committed. We are also ensuring that the men and women who work at West Point and other military installations are people who the American people can trust to work at these sensitive facilities and to keep them secure. Had these jobs been outsourced to private companies we wouldn't have had the kind of control over security that we need at our military installations."

In March, the Pentagon announced its decision to privatize 394 operations and maintenance jobs at West Point that have long been held by government employees. The Department of Defense revealed it was planning to outsource West Point government jobs to a private company from Georgia. The 394 workers at West Point subsequently appealed the Defense Department's decision to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which last month ruled in the workers favor; citing flaws in the cost comparison analysis that would have led to a waste of taxpayer dollars. Specifically, GAO found that the Pentagon used unrealistic figures provided by the private sector when determining whether it was cost-effective to outsource the

government jobs at West Point. While the findings were supportive of Hinchev's view that the jobs at West Point should not be privatized, the GAO's decision was not binding. With that in mind, Hinchev and others increased the pressure on the Army to drop the A76 review at West Point. The Army finally relented to the pressure from Hinchev and others and abandoned its attempt to privatize the jobs at West Points. The Pentagon also sought to privatize an additional 137 custodial jobs at West Point, but that plan was subsequently jettisoned as well.

As part of the bill that passed the House today, the congressman also secured the inclusion of an additional provision that would block the privatization of more than 20 positions that manage the water and wastewater utilities at West Point. All totaled, 551 jobs at West Point that were once threatened to be privatized have been saved.

While the provision Hinchev and Hall successfully helped push through the House was no longer needed at West Point, the measure approved today in the House prevents all other A76 privatization efforts from being carried out. Those privatization reviews were started during the Bush administration. Prior to the Army sparing the jobs at West Point, a Pentagon document showed that 3,575 civilian jobs and 2,394 military jobs were in jeopardy of being privatized. The provision Hinchev helped draft will prevent any jobs from being privatized.

Earlier this year, Congress passed legislation that President Obama subsequently signed into law that bars any future privatization studies. Since the West Point study and others were already underway, government jobs at the academy and elsewhere were still eligible to be privatized. Hinchev worked closely with House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Chairman John Murtha (D-PA) to ensure the inclusion of the provision blocking the privatization of government jobs.