

*Congressman's Provision in Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2010 Would Prevent the Pentagon from Privatizing Nearly 6,000 Civilian & Military Jobs*

Washington, DC - The House today approved a provision that Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) helped author as part of the fiscal year 2010 Defense Appropriations bill that would prevent the Pentagon from moving forward with its plan to potentially privatize nearly 6,000 civilian and military jobs, including at least 531 jobs at West Point. With the provision secured in the House, the focus now shifts to the Senate, which is poised to take up its own version of the defense spending bill in September.

The provision blocks a Pentagon decision made earlier this year to proceed with a plan initiated during the Bush administration that sought to privatize hundreds of federal civilian jobs at West Point. Additionally, the measure prevents all other privatization efforts, known as Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76 privatization reviews, from being carried out. According to a Pentagon document, 3,575 civilian jobs and 2,394 military jobs are in jeopardy of being privatized. The provision Hinchey helped draft would prevent that from happening. 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.

"Today, the House rejected a Bush administration ideological effort to privatize inherently governmental positions at West Point and other U.S. military facilities across the country," Hinchey said. "This bold step will protect the jobs of nearly 6,000 workers across the country and ensure that those positions are not outsourced to foreign companies. The hardworking men and women at West Point and at military installations throughout the U.S. should take solace in the House's actions today, knowing that we stand behind them and the good work that they do on our country's behalf."

Congressman John Hall (D-NY), who worked with Hinchey to reverse the decision to privatize government jobs at West Point, said, "I thank Congressman Hinchey for his continued efforts and leadership fighting this illegal and unmerited privatization plan. Allowing the privatization of innately government jobs at West Point would deal a painful blow to the West Point community. The A76 study that led to the privatization of West Point jobs has been inherently flawed, skewed, and discriminatory since its inception. Privatization reviews were commissioned by the Bush administration as part of an ideological effort to outsource government jobs to private companies. Congress has since rightfully outlawed these privatization reviews. Furthermore,

outsourcing West Point's government jobs to a private company will actually end up costing the taxpayers more money than it would to keep the jobs in the government. West Point employees and the West Point community should not suffer because of an illegal, faulty holdover from the Bush administration."

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. Hinchey 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.

In March, the Department of Defense 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. Another effort to privatize an additional 137 custodial jobs at West Point was initially rejected, but is under review. Prior to the Pentagon's initial decision on whether to privatize jobs at West Point, Hinchey and Hall, who are both members of the West Point Board of Visitors, wrote a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates, urging him to cancel the A-76 study that resulted in the decision to privatize the West Point jobs. That study was commissioned during the Bush administration as a way to eliminate jobs at West Point that have long been held by government workers and outsource them to private companies.

Hinchey and Hall have repeatedly noted that the A-76 process has been found by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to be ineffective and discriminatory against women, minorities, and older workers.