

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Congressman John Hall (D-NY) today released the following joint statement after the Department of Defense announced its decision to privatize 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. Last week, 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 study that resulted in the decision to privatize the West Point jobs. That study, known as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) A-76 privatization review, 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.

In their letter to Gates, the two House members noted that Congress recently approved the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, which prevented any new A-76 studies from being conducted. The A-76 process has been found by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to be ineffective and discriminatory.

"We are very troubled by the decision to privatize hundreds of jobs at West Point that have long been held by government employees. The A-76 study was commissioned by the Bush administration as part of an ideological attempt to cut government jobs and outsource them to private companies. The Government Accountability Office has studied the A-76 process and determined that outsourcing government jobs to private companies ends up costing taxpayers more money than it would to keep the jobs in the government and that privatization leads to discrimination against women and minorities. Shifting government jobs at West Point to the private sector makes no sense financially, poses a potential security risk, and it has the potential to violate civil rights.

"Civilian government employees at West Point have done their jobs honorably and effectively for a long time and should not lose those jobs as the result of an ideologically driven study initiated by the previous president. We strongly encourage President Obama and Secretary Gates to intervene and not let the misguided policies of the past result in misguided actions in the future."