

Will Offer Amendment to the Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2010

Washington, DC - In an effort to save local jobs, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, today formally announced that he will soon introduce a measure in Congress that would block a recent Pentagon decision to privatize hundreds of inherently government jobs at West Point. The congressman said he would offer an amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2010, which would prohibit the Pentagon from using any funds in its budget to implement the West Point privatization plan that the Bush administration initiated.

By offering an amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2010, a bill that Congress must address this year, Hinchey is ensuring that Congress will consider in the coming months whether to block the Bush administration's privatization efforts that would potentially leave hundreds of West Point employees without jobs. Congressman John Hall (D-NY) is working with Hinchey on the amendment.

"Privatizing hundreds of long-standing government jobs at West Point would be a terrible mistake that would carry forward the misguided policies of the Bush administration," Hinchey said. "Congress must step in and stop the Department of Defense from outsourcing these government jobs to a private company in Georgia and ensure that the current employees at West Point get to keep their current jobs and benefits. Our military academies serve as a source of pride for Americans and it would be an absolute shame if we turned our back on hundreds of government employees and put a private company in charge of operations there. The Bush administration policy that allowed us to get to this point is wasteful and discriminatory and must be reversed."

"The study allowing this privatization of West Point jobs has been inherently flawed, skewed, and discriminatory since its inception," said Hall. "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."

Congress recently passed legislation that President Obama subsequently signed into law that bars any future privatization studies, known as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) A-76 privatization review. Since the West Point study was already underway, the privatization of government jobs at the academy will occur unless action is taken to stop it. Hinchey plans to offer his amendment to the annual defense funding bill when the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense takes up the measure sometime in the next few months. The congressman's office has already been in contact with the subcommittee about offering the amendment and has received favorable feedback.

Last week, 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. The previous 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 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.