

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today helped the House pass the Homes for Heroes Act -- a bill that expands housing assistance and supportive services for homeless veterans. Homelessness among veterans is a big problem with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimating that nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and that more than 400,000 veterans are homeless at some point during each year.

"Far too often after leaving the service, our veterans experience emotional distress and are unable to find work, which leads to homelessness," Hinchey said. "This bill will help put a roof over the heads of veterans and their families so they can have the foundation needed to lead productive, enjoyable lives. Ensuring proper housing for our veterans is the least we can do to thank them for their sacrifices and service to our country."

The Homes for Heroes Act establishes a \$200 million a year assistance program for supportive housing and services for low-income homeless veterans and their families through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Specifically, the bill authorizes grants to nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives to expand the supply of permanent housing for low-income veterans and their families and to provide supportive services for such veteran families.

The bill also expands the highly successful Department of Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH), authorizing 20,000 rental vouchers annually and making the program permanent. Additionally, the bill requires HUD to create a position within the department to serve as the liaison to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Among other things, the liaison would ensure that the owners of housing projects assisted under the bill have the managerial capacity to assess on an ongoing basis the service needs of residents, coordinate the provision of supportive services, and tailor such services to the individual needs of residents. The bill also allows veterans' families to continue receiving the assistance provided for in the bill in the event of the veteran's death.