

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) tonight released the following statement after the U.S. House of Representatives passed an emergency supplemental appropriations bill that funds U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through the summer of 2009, as well as a variety of domestic priorities including, an extension of unemployment benefits and a landmark expansion of the GI Bill of Rights. The bill was offered in two amendments; the first, which Hinchey opposed, provided money for military operations without setting a timeline for withdrawal, and the second, which Hinchey supported, addressed domestic needs.

"I am disappointed that once again, the House has approved federal funds for President Bush's illegal occupation of Iraq. However, I am proud to have continued my record of voting against funding that does not include a plan to redeploy our troops. I still believe that we must launch a diplomatic offensive, end the occupation of Iraq, and continue to vigorously pursue national security objectives that will help stabilize the Middle East and make the United States more secure.

"The good news is that we have passed a new GI Bill that will restore full, four-year college scholarships to veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan to help make them part of an economic recovery like we did for veterans of World War II. This landmark legislation will help ensure that the nearly 70,000 New Yorkers who have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan can afford to attend college after serving our nation so courageously.

"In addition, the bill also includes provisions to provide a much-needed 13 week extension of unemployment benefits for those workers who are unable to find a job in today's struggling economy. The economy lost 49,000 jobs in May alone and unemployment shot up to 5.5 percent. With nearly 325,000 jobs lost this year and 1.6 million Americans out of work for more than six months, this unemployment assistance comes at a critical time."