

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement after a series of successful votes on the House floor. The congressman voted against spending another \$162.5 billion for military operations primarily in Iraq, voted in favor of setting a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq beginning within 30 days of the measure's enactment, and voted in favor of a variety of domestic initiatives, including an extension of unemployment benefits and a new GI bill that expands college benefits for U.S. servicemen and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I was very pleased to join my fellow Democrats in the House today in voting down a measure that would have continued funding U.S. operations in Iraq. While the Senate will almost certainly put funds for operations in Iraq back in the bill that will ultimately go to the White House, today's vote in the House was an important stand against the illicit, dead end military occupation of Iraq. I am also pleased that we passed a withdrawal plan that would commence 30 days from this bill's enactment. The U.S. invasion and subsequent military occupation of Iraq has been going on longer than our country's involvement in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. There is no plan, nor has there ever been an effective plan for Iraq from this administration. It's time to bring our brave men and women home already so that not another family needs to learn that their loved one was killed or wounded in Iraq. This bill sets a long-needed timeline for our troops to come home and also ensures that no troops in Iraq are sent there without being combat ready.

"I was also pleased to help the House pass a variety of domestic funding priorities, including an expansion of college benefits for our servicemen and women who are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Helping them get a college education is the least we can do to express our gratitude for their enormous personal sacrifices. I am also pleased that we were able to expand unemployment benefits to help people get through the difficult economic circumstances this country is facing. Among other things, the bill also places a moratorium on several Bush administration cuts to Medicaid, provides additional relief for Gulf Coast recovery, and allocates much-needed, emergency international food aid.

"Unfortunately and sadly, President Bush will almost certainly veto anything other than a pure funding bill for operations in Iraq. The president refuses to acknowledge what the vast majority of Americans already know -- it's time to get out. While it appears no real progress in Iraq will be made until a new president is sworn into office, we must not waver at all from our goal of bringing our troops home. The American people and our troops deserve nothing less."