

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) tonight released the following statement in response to President Barack Obama's speech on job creation.

"President Obama has laid out a comprehensive plan to create the jobs our country desperately needs right now, and I support many of the ideas he put forward. After months of distracting debate and political fights in Washington over the debt ceiling, the American people are ready to see us get back to the work of putting people back to work.

"Most New Yorkers are frustrated by the slow pace of recovery that has occurred since the Wall Street driven economic meltdown that occurred in 2008, and last month's jobs report was a sobering reminder about the challenges we face. The small business owners, middle class families and farmers I talk to throughout New York know that doing nothing and hoping things gets better is simply not an option.

"I agree with the president that it is time to invest in rebuilding our nation's infrastructure. With 20 percent of American construction workers out of work and more than 10 percent of our bridges found to be structurally deficient, I know we can solve both problems with the right investments. We should also make substantial investments in alternative energy that can put people back to work right now by creating green jobs and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

"I also believe that it's time to focus on the number one problem facing businesses today. It isn't health care expenses, regulations or taxes - it's the lack of demand in our economy that has resulted from a decline in middle-class purchasing power. While those at the top continue to prosper, average Americans continue to see paychecks that seem smaller and smaller. The income gap in our country is now the largest it has been since the Great Depression, and today the top one percent of the population controls a third of our country's wealth.

"To turn things around, we've got to rebuild our economy so that it works for all Americans - not just the Wall Street bankers and corporate titans. That's why I've introduced legislation to crack down on oil price speculation - so that families can afford to fill up their tanks again. It's also why I've worked to even out the tax code so that cops, teachers, and carpenters no longer pay higher tax rates than millionaire CEOs.

"It's good news to hear that the President Obama is working to refocus our efforts on job creation. Many of the ideas he has put forward would be positive for the country and have received bi-partisan support in the past. I am hopeful that those of us in Congress can come together and get some of these things done. Americans are expecting us to work together and find common ground and the proposal put forward to night is a good place to start."