

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives passed the fiscal year 2005 Defense Appropriations bill today that contains \$2.5 million in funding for Beretta USA Corp. in Prince George's County at the request of Congressman Steny Hoyer.

"The 9mm sidearm that many of the Marine Corp servicemen and women carry are approximately 15 years old," said Congressman Hoyer. "This pistol modernization project will greatly increase the safety and effectiveness of these weapons. The \$2.5 million in federal funding included in today's bill will replace the necessary parts, will improve the operational service life of these M-9 9mm pistols and will improve the safety of these weapons for the servicemen and women using them."

The Marine Corp is the heaviest user of their issued service side arm, the M-9 9mm pistol due to their aggressive training and tactics. Between 1987-1991, the Marine Corps purchased approximately 72,000 M-9 Pistols. The M9s were originally supplied with the manufacturer's quality magazines. As these magazines wore out, the Army, as the single supplier to the Department of Defense, replaced them with magazines supplied by the lowest bidder. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, these replacement magazines routinely failed. This funding will permit the Marine Corps to modernize the M-9 pistol.

Last year, Congressman Hoyer successfully secured \$5 million in federal funds to modernize 33,500 (46.3%) of the Marine Corps M-9 pistols. The \$2.5 million included in the fiscal year 2005 Defense Appropriations bill will continue to upgrade the US Marine Corps M-9 pistols.

The Senate must now pass the fiscal year 2005 Department of Defense Appropriations bill and then the differences in the two bills must be worked out in a Conference Committee before the bill may become law.

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