WASHINGTON, DC – On Monday, June 11, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) hosted a congratulatory tea reception on Capitol Hill for students from the Fifth Congressional District (Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's and areas of Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties) who were offered appointments to a U.S. Service academy this year.

"I am very proud of these exceptional young men and women, who together represent a very strong showing from the 5th District," Hoyer said. "To be accepted to any of the military academies is a reflection of intelligence, hard work, and perseverance - exactly the qualities that we need in our military officers."

"During the last six years, our nation has made a tremendous request of its military and their families as we continue to fight in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world. The courage and determination exhibited by our military provides these students with a very real picture of the service they are preparing for at these esteemed institutions.

“Furthermore, these academies teach skills that are invaluable in today's job market. Graduation from the U.S. Military, Air Force, Naval, and Merchant Marine Academies ensures a successful future for today's young men and women, both for those who pursue a career in the military and for those who enter the job market after fulfilling their obligations.

“It is so encouraging to have met so many motivated young men and women who are eager to serve their country," concluded Hoyer. "I am excited for these talented future leaders from Maryland as they embark on this challenging and rewarding journey. I thank them for accepting the responsibility of our country’s defense, and I wish them the best of luck.”

Every year, Rep. Hoyer nominates outstanding candidates from the 5th District for admission into one of four United States Service Academies: The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York (Army), the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

The appointment process is highly competitive and requires students to meet strict academic qualifications. Applicants must also interview with and receive a recommendation by a non-partisan Academy Selection Board appointed by Congressman Hoyer.

Once the nominations are forwarded to the Service Academies, they evaluate each student’s eligibility based on his or her academic and extra-curricular record, leadership skills, physical stamina and other requirements. Each year, only about 1,200 students from across the nation enter each Academy.