

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to block the next scheduled congressional pay raise. At a time when the economy is forcing so many of the families we represent to tighten their belts, I believe this is the wrong time to be raising our own pay.

Last month, 524,000 Americans lost their jobs, bringing the unemployment rate to its highest since 1993. Since last year, jobless rates increased in 49 States and in the District of Columbia. In my home State of Arizona, unemployment rose by over 50 percent, leaving nearly 200,000 workers unemployed.

Last week, I introduced House Resolution 156, with Representative Paul of Texas, to stop the next automatic congressional pay raise from taking effect next year. As of this morning, we have been joined by 77 cosponsors--Republicans and Democrats.

Our Nation is at war. Our economy is reeling. The American people aren't getting a pay raise. We shouldn't either. I will be donating my 2009 pay raise to charity just as I did with the 2008 pay raise.

I urge my colleagues to join our growing coalition and to support the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act.