

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell today used his maiden speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to urge Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 3, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, of which Mitchell is a co-sponsor.

Mitchell made the following remarks:

"Just a few months ago, the American people sent a clear message to Washington: it is time to expand our investment in embryonic stem cell research.

"I heard that message loud and clear from my constituents in Arizona who believe - as I do - that the best way we can honor life is to use science and ethical research to discover treatments for the millions of Americans who suffer from diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's and Huntington's Disease.

"The people of my District understand that we have a moral obligation to invest in embryonic stem cell research because it provides the best hope for a cure for these diseases and many others.

"Last year, I met a fellow Arizonan who helped me understand just how important this fight for cures is to so many people and so many families.

"His name is Phil Hardt, and he suffers from Huntington's Disease - a disease no person would ever want to have. Huntington's Disease results from the genetically programmed degeneration of brain cells that causes uncontrolled movements, loss of intellectual faculties, and emotional disturbance.

"It is a terrible and agonizing disease that has no cure. But with the promise of embryonic stem cell research, there is hope for a cure.

"But Mr. Speaker - today, Phil and people like him all over the country need more than hope. They need action.

"They need action from this Congress: for us to once again pass this important legislation.

"And they need action from the President. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to remind the President that he has in his hands the opportunity to improve the lives of so many people, and help so many families.

"The American people support ethical embryonic stem cell research, and so does a vast bi-partisan majority in Congress. When this legislation reaches the President's desk, I urge him to do the right thing and honor life by signing this legislation into law.

"Thank you."