

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell released the following statement on H.R. 1686:

"Like most Arizonans I am outraged that AIG would hand out extravagant bonuses while receiving taxpayer assistance to keep the company afloat. It is a slap in the face to taxpayers who are struggling hard enough to make ends meet.

"We cannot let AIG, or any other company, get away with those types of bonuses if they are receiving federal assistance. We also need to ensure that the Treasury Department establishes real transparency and accountability for TARP funds.

"This bill quite simply neglected to address the main issue - taxpayers deserve oversight and review of how the TARP funds are spent. It fails to set up any system or review for how funds would be spent moving forward. Additionally, we do not know yet if this will work, especially if some of the recipients are former AIG employees in foreign countries and not subject to our taxation.

"I understand the frustration, but passing knee-jerk tax bills without adequate time for debate and public review, especially when the constitutionality of the bill is in question, is not responsible. We can do better."

To fully recoup the AIG bonuses, Congressman Mitchell has co-sponsored H.R. 1577, bi-partisan legislation that would require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a plan within two weeks to recoup the AIG bonuses. The legislation would also withhold any future assistance until bonuses are repaid, and require the approval of Treasury for any future bonuses and incentives from TARP beneficiaries, as well as for any contracts for bonuses and incentives.

Mitchell has fought to bring accountability and transparency to TARP funds and to recoup the bonuses paid for with federal assistance. Earlier this week, he wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury to urge legal action to recover these funds and to quit coddling AIG and require it to disclose how it is using taxpayer funds.

In January, citing a need for more accountability and transparency, he voted for H.J.Res. 3 to prevent the release of the second \$350 billion to Treasury to continue TARP.

Also in January, Mitchell voted for H.R. 384 to help ensure accountability for the funds released by the Senate that same month. This legislation would put limits on compensation for executives receiving federal assistance funds the Treasury Department to establish benchmarks that TARP recipients must achieve to strengthen the financial system, as well as require beneficiaries to provide quarterly reports of how each dollar is being used. H.R. 384 passed the House of Representatives and is currently pending before the U.S. Senate.