

*Allows schools to use funds to meet compliance with health codes*

**WASHINGTON** - The U.S. House of Representatives today passed a bill that includes a provision by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell to authorize funding to help schools make critical building repairs to protect the health and safety of students and teachers. The funding can help address schools facing situations similar to the one Corona del Sol High School faced last year.

H.R. 2187, The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act, is designed to improve our public schools, create clean-energy jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and lower energy costs for taxpayers. The bill passed by a bipartisan vote of 275 to 155.

"Students and teachers deserve a clean and safe environment to go to school," Mitchell said. "As a former high school teacher, I understand that it is critical for schools to have access to funding for needed repairs to ensure they meet health and safety codes. Schools are an institution of learning and must not become health hazards for students and faculty."

Last year, in a similar version of the bill, Mitchell worked to include a provision to permit local education agencies eligible for grants under this legislation to utilize these funds to bring public schools into compliance with applicable health codes. While last year's version was passed by the House of Representatives it was not acted upon in the Senate. This year's version of the bill also includes Mitchell's provision.

Mitchell injected the change into last year's bill after reports that students and faculty at Corona del Sol High School in Tempe suffered from health problems ranging from "tumors and cancers to asthma and allergies" and that the failing 30-year-old ventilation system was contributing to poor air quality, mold and high carbon dioxide levels at the school. The levels of carbon dioxide exceed state standards by about four times. [Source: [Arizona Republic](#), April 11, 2008]

Many schools suffer from inadequate air quality as well as toxic substances such as mold, asbestos, and lead which can cause significant health problems including headaches, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, to respiratory illness. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one-third of schools, which serve approximately 14 million students, are desperately in need of

extensive repairs. [Source: [Environmental Protection Agency](#) ]

Mitchell taught for almost 30 years in the Tempe Union High School District, the same district as Corona del Sol High School.