

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today introduced a resolution in the House to affirm the chamber's support for charitable giving and its opposition to raising taxes on donations.

Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida joined Mitchell in pushing the resolution, which is a reaction to proposals in President Obama's budget that would limit tax breaks on charitable giving.

"It has long been a hallmark of the U.S. tax code that giving gets a tax break," Mitchell said in a floor statement. "At this time of great need at home and abroad, we must not make it harder for Americans to give."

Congressman Mitchell's full floor statement follows:

Statement of Rep. Harry E. Mitchell
OF ARIZONA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 12, 2009

Madame Speaker, I rise today in support of charitable giving.

Americans give generously.

In the weeks following the deadly 2004 tsunami in Asia, donations from American charities outpaced official government aid by more than \$100 million.

When Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast of our nation, Americans responded with faster and more forceful giving than ever before. In the first 10 days, charitable giving topped \$700 million. Ultimately, more than \$4 billion was donated to the recovery effort.

Since the mid-1990s, charitable giving has accounted for roughly 2 percent of our annual GDP, which is more than double the rate of giving in any other country.

And Madame Speaker, most donations don't come from big business. They come from hardworking Americans. Individuals account for 75 percent of charitable giving.

Recently, some have proposed limitations on the tax deduction for charitable giving. We face a staggering deficit, and I believe we must balance the budget – but not by raising taxes on these donations.

It has long been a hallmark of the U.S. tax code that giving gets a tax break. Today, I joined Rep. Ros-Lehtinen of Florida to introduce a resolution that would state this Chamber's support for charitable giving and its opposition to raising taxes on donations. At this time of great need at home and abroad, we must not make it harder for Americans to give. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing a tax increase on charitable donations.