

WASHINGTON – Citing concerns about unnecessary spending, U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell cast a vote on Wednesday against the Democratic-backed appropriations package for the current fiscal year.

Despite Mitchell's nay vote, the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, H.R. 1105, passed 245-178. Mitchell was one of 20 Democrats who voted against the measure.

Mitchell said he could not support the entire spending plan, particularly double-digit increases to the budgets of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Capitol Complex.

"I believe fiscal discipline starts at home," said Mitchell. "If we expect other parts of the federal government to control spending, I think we, in Congress, need to control our own. Spending more on Congress -- more on ourselves -- will not help get the economy back on track. While I agree with much of what's in the omnibus bill, it contains too much unnecessary spending, and we were not given an opportunity to amend the bill to take the unnecessary spending measures out."

Mitchell cited the following items contained in the bill:

- Increases funding for the Legislative branch by 11 percent.
- Provides a 10-percent increase in funding for the operations for the House of Representatives.
- Increases the budget for the Architect of the Capitol by 28 percent for projects like the Capitol Visitors Center.

Mitchell has previously voted against increased spending for Congressional operating expenses. In 2007, he voted against the Fiscal Year 2008 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill citing similar concerns over increased spending for Congressional operations.

Mitchell said he was pleased that the Appropriations bill was amended to include a halt to the

Mitchell Votes Against Democratic Spending Bill

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2010 Congressional pay raise. Mitchell has for three years introduced legislation to stop the Congressional pay raise. This year he had – along with co-sponsor Rep. Ron Paul of Texas – garnered 111 bipartisan cosponsors before House Leaders agreed to include language in a future appropriations bill to stop the automatic pay raise for House members in 2010. Before final passage, Mitchell joined 397 of his colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, in voting to add a provision to block the 2010 Congressional pay raise to the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009.

“Stopping the Congressional Pay Raise is an important step, but I strongly believe we must tighten our belts further and stop unnecessary federal spending,” Mitchell added.

Mitchell donated his 2008 pay raise to Arizona charities and has committed to donating his 2009 pay raise to Arizona charities as well.