

WASHINGTON— U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today offered an amendment to attach his bill to block the 2010 automatic pay raise to the economic stimulus package, arguing that Congress has an obligation to forgo the \$4,700 pay raise as thousands of Americans lose their jobs every day.

“These are tough times, and the American people expect their leaders to do the right thing,” said Mitchell.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates Mitchell’s legislation would save taxpayers an estimated \$20 million over the next 10 years. [Source: Congressional Budget Office, Jan. 26, 2009]

According to CNN, more than 71,000 jobs were cut on Monday and “More than 200,000 job cuts have been announced so far this year, according to company reports. Nearly 2.6 million jobs were lost over 2008, the highest yearly job-loss total since 1945.” [Source: CNN.com, Jan. 26, 2009]

Earlier this month, Mitchell and Rep. Ron Paul of Texas introduced bipartisan legislation to block the automatic Congressional pay hike for 2010. H.R. 156 has 90 Republican and Democratic co-sponsors.

Members of Congress are set to receive an automatic \$4,700 pay increase next year.

Last week, President Barack Obama announced his decision to freeze the pay of top White House staff. The White House pay freeze “will leave pay levels for senior positions where they were under President George W. Bush.” [Source: Bloomberg News, Jan. 21, 2009]

“Across the country, families are tightening their belts in this economic crisis, and so should Washington,” President Obama said. [Source: White House Press Release, Jan. 21, 2009]

Last year, Mitchell and Paul introduced legislation to block the 2009 pay raise, but it never received a committee hearing. Mitchell donated his 2008 pay raise to Arizona charities.