

WASHINGTON— U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell praised President Barack Obama’s decision to freeze the pay of top White House staff today, and said Congress has a responsibility to forgo a pay raise in a time of economic hardship.

“These are tough times, and the American people expect their leaders to do the right thing,” said Mitchell. “If everyday Americans aren’t getting a pay raise, neither should their representatives in Congress.”

Earlier this month, Mitchell and Rep. Ron Paul of Texas introduced bipartisan legislation to block the automatic Congress pay hike for 2010. H.R. 156 has 81 Republican and Democratic co-sponsors.

Members of Congress are set to receive an automatic \$4,700 pay increase next year. Blocking the increase would save taxpayers \$2.5 million.

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]

Mitchell Praises White House Pay Freeze, Says Congress Has Responsibility to Follow Suit

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