

[The Arizona Republic](#)

Editorial

We've all heard the one about the federal official who announces to a skeptical hometown crowd: "I'm from Washington, D.C., and I'm here to help."

But it was no joke last week when the guy from D.C., U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., made the claim in reference to problem-plagued Corona del Sol High School and had a bill, fresh from passage by the full House, to show for it.

Mitchell is getting well-deserved high-fives from parents frustrated by the apparent paralysis of our state government to do something about the poor air quality at Corona. Perhaps this will embarrass state lawmakers into taking action to help the cash-strapped Tempe Union High School District make the necessary repairs.

After all, maintaining and repairing public schools is rightly a state and local responsibility. Sending our tax dollars to Washington, which takes a hefty cut, borrows some more and then sends it here with a bunch of strings attached is not the most cost-effective way to get a broken ventilation system replaced. Mitchell's bill still must pass the Senate and be signed into law; even then, the grant-application process could take many months.

But give Mitchell credit for doing something.

Ultimately, Tempe Union taxpayers may have to pay part or all of the tab, even though the Legislature agreed a decade ago to upgrade substandard school buildings. In reality, that has been a shared responsibility between the state and school districts, and Tempe Union voters in November rejected a tax measure that would have provided money for school repairs. That measure and a bond issue to pay for school upgrades will be on the ballot this coming November.

But it would be negligent to put off the repairs that long. District officials have managed to scrape together enough money to begin the repairs. It's up to the Legislature to act now to complete the job before school resumes in August.

Because this isn't something the guy from Washington should have to do.

Editor's note: Gov. Janet Napolitano this week responded to a letter House Speaker Jim Weiers sent last week urging her to fund environmental testing at Corona del Sol High School. She has directed the state Department of Health Services to contract with an expert to perform tests.