

[The Arizona Republic](#)

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U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., has elevated the health and safety of Corona Del Sol High School staff and students to a national level.

As a bill to help school districts pay for building, renovating or modernizing buildings that are more energy-efficient and environmentally healthy was being debated on the House floor Wednesday, Mitchell spoke of Corona's battle with poor air quality. He said the school was an example of a nationwide problem.

"In Arizona's Tempe Union High School District, where I taught for almost 30 years, Corona Del Sol High School has an HVAC system in desperate need of replacement. Students and teachers should never have to compromise their health and safety to attend school, and this legislation will help prevent this from happening," said Mitchell, according to a statement released by his office. Mitchell asked for an amendment to let schools that do not meet local and state health codes apply for the federal funding. The bill passed with Mitchell's amendment.

A spokesman for Mitchell said the congressman was disturbed that a 2006 environmental study found toxigenic molds, carbon dioxide levels that exceed state standards and poor air quality at the school.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency has developed a Web site and a free kit on improving school air quality. Even if the bill does become law, Robbie Sherwood, a spokesman for Mitchell, acknowledged Corona needs more immediate help.

"It's not a magic bullet but it was something the congressman decided he could do that might apply to Corona del Sol and other schools down the line," he said.