

[The Tribune](#)

Paul Giblin

Rep. Harry Mitchell today asked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to include his legislation that block Congress' automatic pay raise in a broader economic stimulus package.

Mitchell, a Democrat from Arizona, and presidential hopeful Rep. Ron Paul, a Republican from Texas, introduced legislation Tuesday that would quash a scheduled automatic pay increase of nearly \$4,400 that every member will receive in 2009.

Every member of Congress will be paid \$169,300 this year - a \$4,100 increase from last year pay.

Mitchell tried to block the \$4,100 pay increase last year, and found 29 co-sponsors to support it, but the legislation never made it to the House floor. Mitchell pledged to donate his pay raise to charity. (No word yet on which charities will get the bonanza.)

Mitchell said the timing is wrong to accept another pay raise. Here's the text of his letter to Pelosi:

*January 23, 2008*

*The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Speaker  
United States House of Representatives*

*U.S. Capitol Building, H-232  
Washington, DC 20510*

*Madam Speaker:*

*Yesterday our colleague Dr. Ron Paul and I introduced H.R. 5087, a bill to block the automatic pay raise Members of Congress are scheduled to receive next year.*

*I hope you will agree that this is the wrong time for Congress to raise its own pay and that doing so sends the wrong message to the American people. I urge you to support H.R. 5087 and include it as a part of the upcoming economic stimulus package.*

*As you work with the President and Republican leadership to build a bipartisan economic stimulus package to strengthen the nation's weakening economy, I know you are familiar with the statistics: nationwide inflation shot up 6 percent in 2007 and the same gallon of gas that cost \$2.20 a year ago costs more than \$3 today. New home construction dropped 25 percent, the largest decrease in 27 years. Fears of a recession have sent the stock market into a tailspin. Unemployment is up; home sales are down; and markets around the world are on shaky ground.*

*Even in my home state of Arizona, which for so long seemed immune to economic woes that plagued other parts of the country, is feeling the effects of the Bush recession. Unemployment in my state rose 42 percent between September and December alone, and now 143,800 Arizonans are unemployed. In the East Valley, which I represent, foreclosures increased more than 500 percent in 2007 and in metro Phoenix, 10,000 homes were foreclosed - an 88 percent increase over 2006. Home prices fell 11 percent.*

*The American people didn't get a pay raise this year. I do not know how in good conscience, we, as their representatives in Congress can not only accept one, but insist on another one for next year. When I campaigned for Congress nearly two years ago, I heard from the people in my District that they were disappointed that Members of Congress approved their own pay raise, but cut critical services that made a significant impact on the lives of everyday Americans. Americans are suffering right now and I hope this Congress has the courage to change course.*

*Thank you, as always, for your consideration.*

*Sincerely,*

*Harry E. Mitchell Member of Congress*