

[Scottsdale Tribune](#)

Ryan Pronk

Arizona State University students quizzed Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., on the rising cost of college tuition, children's health insurance and a variety of national and local issues Tuesday during a freeflowing forum on the Tempe campus.

Mitchell told students the best way to have a voice on tuition costs is to get involved in state and local governments.

"You have to put pressure on them," he said.

The students asked the former Tempe mayor for his outlook on the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which is jointly financed by the federal and state governments and provides more than \$35 billion for children who lack sufficient health insurance.

"I'm hopeful that it will pass," he said. If Congress fails to override the veto, lawmakers likely will craft compromise legislation, he said.

President Bush vetoed the measure Oct. 3.

Supporters in the House need to gather 14 more votes to override Bush's veto, Mitchell said.

Liz Simonhoff, ASU's undergraduate student government president, was pleased to see the students and the congressman exchange their views. "It's important to interact with the leaders of our community," she said.

Mitchell was equally enthused.

"I was happy to hear how informed the students were on national and international issues," Mitchell said.

James Quinn, ASU director of special events, said the university may host similar events in the future.

"We'd like to do something like this again next semester," he said. "We're going to try and get local representatives to come speak."

Although Mitchell returns to Arizona's 5th Congressional District nearly every weekend, the forum at the Memorial Union marked only his third trip to ASU since winning office last year.

The district spans Scottsdale, Tempe, Fountain Hills, Ahwatukee Foothills and west Mesa.

Mitchell is serving his first term in federal office. He previously served as a state senator from 1999 through 2006, as Tempe mayor from 1978 through 1994 and as a Tempe city councilman from 1970 through 1978.