

[The Associated Press](#)

PHOENIX -- Newly elected Arizona Rep. Harry Mitchell stressed the importance of funding embryonic stem cell research in his first speech on the floor of the U.S. House on Thursday.

Mitchell asked lawmakers to pass the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007 and urged President Bush to sign the bill. Mitchell, a Democrat, is co-sponsor of the measure.

"The best way we can honor life is to use science and ethical research to discover treatments for the millions of Americans who suffer from diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's and Huntington's Disease," Mitchell said.

"When this legislation reaches the president's desk, I urge him to do the right thing and honor life by signing this legislation into law," he said.

That appeared unlikely. As the House kicked off debate Thursday on stem cell research, Bush issued a fresh veto threat.

Supporters of the controversial research - which holds promise for medical cures of diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's - acknowledge they lack the two-thirds margin needed to override another Bush veto. Bush vetoed a similar measure that passed in 2005 and an override effort fell short.

Mitchell beat out 12-year Republican Congressman J.D. Hayworth in November for Arizona's Fifth District.

Mitchell was the longtime mayor of Tempe and a former state senator.