

WASHINGTON -- Some Capitol Hill lawmakers are calling for more congressional control over the \$700 billion bailout proposal that was approved last month.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson initially said the money would be used to buy up bad debts from financial institutions. The theory was that bad debts, many resulting from subprime mortgage lending, were clogging the credit pipelines and threatening to strangle the economy as a whole.

After Congress signed off on the proposal, however, Paulson changed course. Instead of buying up distressed assets, he has used bailout money for direct capital investments in banks.

Paulson has committed nearly half of the bailout money.

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb., who voted against the bailout, has co-sponsored legislation that would require the Treasury to return to Congress before spending the second half of the money.

"Congress has the responsibility to review how the original bailout funding has been spent and whether it is having the desired effect before more money is obligated," Fortenberry said Monday. "This is too serious for the U.S. Treasury to be making up plays in the huddle."

Winning approval to spend the second half of the bailout might prove difficult. Some members who voted in favor of the original proposal have soured on it after watching Paulson's implementation.

Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb., first voted against the bailout but ultimately supported it. He has since said the speed with which Paulson changed his tactics made the whole exercise seem like a "classic bait and switch."

"The fact that they've changed what the program is, I think it's completely appropriate they have to come back to Congress and remake their case," Terry said Monday.

