

# House OKs astronauts on Soyuz spacecraft

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U.S. astronauts would be allowed to fly on Russian Soyuz spacecraft through 2011 under a measure passed by the U.S. House of Representatives.

The bill was offered in fear the United States might lose access to the international space station, The Washington Post reported Thursday.

The legislation, passed Wednesday and which must pass the Senate and be signed by President Bush, amends the Iran Non-proliferation Act of 2000 that prohibits the use of most Russian space technology as long as Russia continues to export nuclear and missile technology to Iran.

However, the 2000 prohibition was negated by a previous accord, under which Russia agreed to provide 11 free Soyuz trips to the United States. The 11th such flight took U.S. astronaut William McArthur Jr. to the space station early this month.

Without the new measure being approved, the United States will have no way to get its astronauts to the space station since the space shuttle remains grounded because of safety concerns.

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