

Astronauts To Vote From Space

October 27 2008



Commander Mike Fincke (right) and Flight Engineer Greg Chamitoff send a special message from the International Space Station urging all Americans to vote. Credit: NASA TV

(PhysOrg.com) -- In this day and age, people engage in their right to vote from all over the world. But this Nov. 4, few ballots will have traveled as far as those cast by two NASA astronauts.

Commander Edward Michael Fincke and Flight Engineer and Science Officer Greg Chamitoff are living and working onboard the International Space Station. Though they are 220 miles above Earth and orbiting at 17,500 miles per hour, they will still be able to participate in the upcoming election. A 1997 bill passed by Texas legislators sets up a technical procedure for astronauts -- nearly all of whom live in Houston -- to vote from space.

A secure electronic ballot, generated by the Harris and Brazoria County

Clerk's office, is uplinked by NASA's Johnson Space Center Mission Control Center. An e-mail with crew member-specific credentials is sent from the County Clerk to the crew member. These credentials allow the crew member to access the secure ballot.

The astronauts will cast their votes and a secure completed ballot is downlinked and delivered back to the County Clerk's Office by e-mail to be officially recorded.

Provided by NASA

Citation: Astronauts To Vote From Space (2008, October 27) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-10-astronauts-vote-space.html>

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