

# House OKs bill on high-speed Internet service rates

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Republicans snubbed a White House veto threat and pushed legislation through the House Friday that would bar the government from regulating rates that high-speed Internet service providers charge consumers.

House approval came on a near party-line 241-173 vote. With the Senate yet to act and facing a promised veto from the Obama administration, the measure faces long odds of enactment.

Federal Communications Commission has said it has no intention of regulating broadband Internet service rates. Republicans argued that the Obama administration could not be trusted and said the bill would enshrine that principle into law so the commission could not change its mind in the future.

"We all know that what they'd like to do is regulate the Internet so they can tax the Internet, so they could then come in and set all the rates," said Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn.

Democrats said the bill's language that was too broad and would weaken the FCC's ability to protect consumers.

"It gives an undefined answer to prevent an undefined event from happening," said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt. "So the effect here is you have a bill that's playing on the fear of the unknown."

Republicans said the bill's language was not vague. The chief sponsor,

Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., called it "a great first step in preserving the Internet as free for future generations."

In its letter to lawmakers threatening a veto by President Barack Obama, the White House wrote that the legislation "would restrict the FCC's ability to take enforcement actions to protect consumers." They also wrote it would "limit the commission's ability to address new practices and adapt its rules for a dynamic, fast-changing online marketplace."

Democrats said the legislation could erode the net neutrality rules the commission adopted last year that require [service providers](#) to treat all Internet traffic the same, effectively barring telephone and cable companies from speeding some content or intentionally slowing others.

Republicans said competition could be stifled unless lawmakers bar the government from retroactively reviewing rates that broadband providers have imposed.

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