

U.S. House of Representatives Passes Bill to Block Guantanamo Transfers



Washington, September 16 (RHC)-- The U.S. House of Representatives in Congress has passed a bill that would block the transfer of any detainees from the notorious Guantanamo Bay military prison during President Barack Obama's remaining tenure.

The measure was passed on Thursday largely across party lines with all but four Republicans backing it and all but 12 of Obama's fellow Democrats opposing it. The draft legislation must now pass the Senate, where it faces tough odds. The White House has promised to veto the bill.

In a statement, Representative Ed Royce, a Democrat from California, said he was pleased the House voted to halt the Obama administration's "reckless and dangerous policy of releasing detainees from terrorist prison."

The bill would stop transfers only until Obama leaves the White House in January or signs a new National Defense Authorization Act, an annual bill setting military policy which includes other provisions. Barack Obama had promised to close the Guantanamo prison during the 2008 presidential election campaign, but his efforts have been continually thwarted by Republican lawmakers in Congress.

The U.S. presidential election in November will likely determine the future of Guantanamo, as Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has promised to fill the notorious prison with "bad dudes" if he is elected president.

About 780 men have passed through the facility since it was opened following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks to hold terrorism suspects. There are currently about 60 prisoners at the base.

In recent months, the Obama administration has accelerated the rate at which detainees who have been approved for transfer are released from the detention center. The transfer of inmates has fueled concerns by prison supporters that he might use his executive powers to close it altogether before leaving office in January.

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