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# Senate votes to end Cuba travel restrictions

By Jim Abrams  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Senate joined the House on Thursday in striking at the four-decade-old policy of making travel to Cuba a criminal act, putting Congress on a collision course with Bush administration efforts to step up enforcement of travel restrictions.

"The travel ban does nothing to hurt Fidel Castro," said Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D. "It only harms Americans." He was co-sponsor of the measure, passed 59-36, that bars use of government money to enforce current travel restrictions.

Last month, the House approved identical language in its version of a \$90 billion bill to fund Transportation and Treasury department programs in the budget year that started Oct. 1.

The votes in the two GOP-controlled chambers came despite a White House warning that the president would be advised to veto the bill if it includes the Cuba provision. The legislation contains vital money for highways, law enforcement and anti-terrorism.

The White House said in a statement that unlicensed tourism "provides economic resources to the Castro regime while doing nothing to help the Cuban people."

In neither the Senate nor House did the Cuba vote reach the two-thirds margin need-

ed to overturn a presidential veto. House and Senate leaders must negotiate a final compromise on the spending bill; in the past, they have used this process to remove language approved earlier that would have eased penalties against Cuba.

But Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., said the Senate vote was "a strong repudiation of the president's recent announcement that his administration plans to tighten and increase the travel restrictions."

The Homeland Security Department announced this month that it was enhancing efforts to curtail illegal travel and transport of goods to Cuba.

Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, a co-sponsor with Dorgan, said fighting terrorism and drug trafficking should be a higher priority than Cuban tourism. He said a Treasury office was spending 10 percent of its budget "to track down little old grammars from the West Coast who through a Canadian travel agency chose to bike in Cuba."

The Treasury Department estimates that about 160,000 Americans, half of them Cuban-Americans visiting family members, traveled to Cuba legally last year. Humanitarian and educational groups, journalists and diplomats are also allowed visits,

but thousands of other Americans visit illegally, by way of third countries, risking thousands of dollars in fines and imprisonment.

Tourism officials have estimated that as many as 1 million Americans might visit Cuba in the first year after the lifting of the embargo.

**"The travel ban does nothing to hurt Fidel Castro. It only harms Americans."**

— Sen. Byron Dorgan  
D - North Dakota

President Kenneth imposed the travel ban in 1963, a year after the Cuban missile crisis. President Carter let it lapse in 1977 but it was reimposed by President Reagan in 1982. Violators could face criminal penalties of up to \$250,000 and 10 years in prison.

Free-trade Republicans mostly from farm states have joined liberal Democrats in recent years questioning the effectiveness of the trade and travel embargoes, saying that the Cuban president has used them in his own advantage to avoid liberalizing contacts with Americans.

Congress loosened the trade embargo in 2000 to allow sale of agricultural products and medicine on a cash-only basis.

The House, along with its vote last month on the travel restrictions, lifted caps on money that can be sent to Cuban family members on the island.

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## Spam no more?

### Lawmakers approve limiting unwanted commercial e-mail

By Ted Bridis  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Senate has voted to impose tough new limits against sending unwanted commercial e-mails, but supporters warned computer users not to expect any immediate end to offers for prescription drugs, cheap loans, herbal remedies and pornography.

The "Can Spam" bill, approved Wednesday by a 97-0 vote, would outlaw the shadiest techniques used by many of the Internet's most prolific e-mailers, who pump out millions of unsolicited messages daily.

The bill, sponsored by Sens. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., would prohibit senders of unsolicited commercial e-mail from disguising their identity by using a false return address or misleading subject line. The legislation also would prohibit senders from harvesting addresses off Web sites and require such e-mails to include a mechanism so recipients can indicate they do not want future mass-mailings.

A provision proposed by Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., authorizes the Federal Trade Commission to establish a do-not-spam list, similar to the agency's popular do-not-call list of telephone numbers that marketers are supposed not to call.

The Direct Marketing Association opposed that provision and has described it as "a bad idea that is never going to work."

The Bush administration supports the bill, although similar legislation has stalled in the House.

"Kingpin spammers who send out e-mail by the million are threatening to drown the Internet in a sea of trash, and American people want it stopped," Wyden said. Acknowledging problems with e-mails sent from overseas, he urged other countries to approve similar limits.

Burns said time spent by consumers wading through unwanted messages and the costs to businesses and Internet providers delivering them were "escalating and wide-ranging." Under the bill, he said, "people will think twice before they send it, and that's the answer."

The bill also requires commercial e-mail senders to include their physical address along with a clear notice that the message is an advertisement or sales pitch.

Despite the vote, senators cautioned computer users not to expect an immediate end to overflowing inboxes.

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