

To amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize transportation for United States government astronauts returning from space between their residence and various locations.

Extended Summary:

Under section 1344 of title 31, United States Code, an agency may spend funds to maintain, operate, and repair passenger carriers only to the extent such passenger carriers are used for official purposes. Except for specified cases, transportation between an individual's residence and place of employment is not considered an "official purpose."

A human returning from an extended stay in space can suffer from balance, vision, and muscle-strength impairment upon their return, impacting their ability to operate a motor vehicle. NASA astronauts returning from space often engage in medical research and monitoring, as well as other official duties, upon their return to Earth. The ASTRO Act clarifies that a passenger carrier may be used to transport a federal officer or employee returning from space who has not yet been cleared to drive between the individual's residence and place of work when such transportation is necessary for medical research or official duties.

Background:

- By amending subsection (a)(2)(C) to automatically include post-flight astronaut transportation as an official purpose, the bill removes procedural hurdles, ensures consistent support for returning crew, and helps safeguard both astronaut health and the integrity of NASA's human spaceflight operations.
- The ASTRO Act will not result in new costs or new authority. It simply provides a streamlined approval process, reducing paperwork and administrative burdens.