

Magnitsky Bill to Get Vote Thursday

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A pin worn by an activist bearing the face of Sergei Magnitsky and the words "We demand justice." **Igor Tabakov**

U.S. lawmakers plan to vote on the "Magnitsky List" legislation this week, raising the specter of a harsh response from the Kremlin.

The bill, introduced by a group of influential U.S. senators that includes former Republican presidential candidate John McCain, would blacklist Russian officials linked to the 2009 jail death of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky and other officials implicated in human rights violations.

Russia has accused the United States of meddling in its internal affairs with the legislation.

"If the new anti-Russian Magnitsky bill is passed, it would require a response from us," presidential aide Yury Ushakov said last week, adding that Moscow hoped it would not happen, RIA-Novosti reported.

The U.S. House's Foreign Affairs Committee will put the bill up for a vote Thursday, according to a committee schedule published over the weekend.

Magnitsky was arrested shortly after he accused tax and police officials of embezzling \$230 million. A independent inquiry by the Kremlin's human rights council found that he died after being beaten by prison guards. One prison doctor has been charged with negligence, but no one has been convicted in the death.

The U.S. State Department, hoping to avoid the congressional action amid efforts by President Barack Obama to “reset” relations, banned several dozen Russian officials implicated in the death last summer in a move that sparked a tit-for-tat response from the Russian side, which said it also banned several U.S. officials.

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