

Duma May Install High-End Cameras to Check Attendance

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The  Moscow Times

In the latest bid to fight poor attendance by lawmakers, State Duma deputies are considering installing an expensive video surveillance system able to identify their own members in their dimly lit assembly hall, Nezavisimaya Gazeta [reported](#) Thursday.

Lawmakers planning the initiative expect the powerful cameras and complex face-recognition software will cost 3 million rubles (\$100,000), although the cost will likely reach 10 million to 15 million rubles, the report said, citing sources with knowledge of the matter.

Deputies rejected the idea of installing an electronic pass system like those implemented in most offices worldwide, the newspaper added.

The lower chamber of the parliament came under fire after a May television report showed lawmakers successfully pass a bill, despite having only 88 of 450 deputies in attendance. Lawmakers were shown hurrying around the chamber to vote for absent colleagues.

A bill making attendance for lawmakers mandatory was passed in July, but noncompliance

carries no penalties.

Most deputies now attend Duma meetings for the “voting hour,” when they are photographed, but video footage of the assembly hall indicates that they still skip most other sessions, Nezavisimaya Gazeta said.

Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov announced that all 450 lawmakers were present at the opening of the chamber's fall session Sept. 7. Reports last week said, however, that Ashot Yegiazaryan, a deputy with the Liberal Democratic Party, has not appeared in the Duma since last summer.

Yegiazaryan could have fled abroad after a business dispute, some media reports said at the time. No account for the discrepancy in attendance reports has been provided by the Duma so far, and Yegiazaryan's office has declined to comment on his whereabouts to The Moscow Times.

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