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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Senators Approve Sex Offender Bill

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The Federation Council on Wednesday approved a bill that would ban people convicted of child sexual abuse from working with children, the chamber's web site reported.

Current law bans convicted offenders from working with children for several years after their release, a period determined by the gravity of the crime.

The chamber also approved a bill Wednesday that would ban people suspected or convicted of a number of crimes — including those directed against someone's life, health, dignity and sexual freedom as well as public safety — from adopting children.

The bills will now go to President Dmitry Medvedev to be signed into law.

Medvedev supported the legislation in his state-of-the-nation address in late November, saying child molesters "should be kept at a cannon-shot's distance from institutions for children."

The number of registered crimes against children grew from 40,000 in 2000 to 100,000 in 2009, Senator Valentina Petrenko told the Federation Council on Wednesday, citing Interior

Ministry data, Interfax reported.

About 97 percent of cases of violence against children remain unregistered, she said.

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