

Front Fights for Support, Not for Votes

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Lipetsk hosting a People's Front Day with a pop concert on Sunday. The banner says, "I signed up for the front." **Sergei Nikolayev**

Many Russians remain unexcited about Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's All-Russia People's Front — but some are willing to vote for it anyway, according to a new poll.

The odd discrepancy was exposed by a nationwide poll held by the state-owned VTsIOM pollster earlier this month and [published](#) Thursday.

The poll indicated that only 19 percent of Russians "positively" assess the group's creation — a figure that has remained virtually unchanged since Putin unveiled the group in early May — while 13 percent, down 1 percentage point from June, have a negative assessment. The rest either do not care or are unaware of the group.

But at the same time, 25 percent of those polled said they were ready to vote for candidates fielded by the group at State Duma elections in December.

The number of Russians who know about the group's existence grew 5 percent to 55 percent over the last month. Interestingly, the Russians who are most knowledgeable about the group are opposition-minded. The All-Russia People's Front is known to 69 percent of supporters of non-parliamentary parties and 66 percent of the Communists' constituency.

Support for the group was higher among those familiar with its existence prior to learning about it from the pollsters. Still, only 33 percent of the previously informed said they would vote for the group's nominees in the Duma race. The support is highest among United Russia voters, Putin supporters and employees of state agencies, including law enforcement.

The survey polled 1,600 people in 46 regions and had a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

Putin created the All-Russia People's Front to boost support for United Russia by bringing together various nonpolitical groups and organizations and giving them a say in politics. Putin has promised that United Russia, which he leads, will reserve 150 of the 600 places on its Duma party list for members of the group.

The group has been implicated in several scandals after recruiting organizations whose members were not asked whether they wanted to join and accepting online membership registrations without checking them — which resulted in "Winnie-the-Pooh" and "Michelle Obama" joining the group. Its sources of funding have also been questioned, although no investigations have followed.

The group, meanwhile, is working hard to boost public support. On Sunday, it held a People's Front day in Lipetsk, complete with a pop music concert and a citywide advertising campaign targeting mainly the young — who, according to the VTsIOM poll, remain the least informed group when it comes to the All-Russia People's Front.

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