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Police Take Lawmaker's License

By Alexandra Odynova

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Gudkov **Igor Tabakov**

A State Duma deputy who has campaigned for drivers' rights lost his own license Thursday for violating traffic rules.

Gennady Gudkov, a member of A Just Russia, was stopped in his Audi Q7 by traffic police after he illegally crossed a painted line separating a VIP middle lane from the regular traffic lanes while quickly approaching the Duma building in central Moscow, Interfax reported.

A policeman asked him to show his permission for the strobe lights installed on his car. "He refused to discuss the light's legitimacy, dropped his documents on the road and drove away saying he was late for a meeting," a police official told Interfax.

A video shot by a companion of Gudkov shows the police taking away his documents.

Under the law, police cannot delay Duma deputies without serious cause.

Gudkov confirmed that he had lost his license but said he had fallen victim to a Moscow police

crackdown on cars equipped with illegal flashing blue lights, RIA-Novosti reported. The crackdown, which started this week, has received wide coverage in state media and follows calls by motorists' rights campaigners to reduce the number of flashing blue lights granting priority on the roads to their owners.

The incident is embarrassing for Gudkov, who has recently become a defender of motorists' rights.

Curiously, Gudkov lost his license a day after he released a list of luxury cars owned by state officials on his son Dmitry's LiveJournal blog.

"It was in response to our investigation into cars," Dmitry Gudkov, also a Just Russia member, wrote on Twitter. He scolded his father for violating traffic rules.

In the course of their inquiry, the father and son found more than 1,000 luxury cars purchased by various state agencies and departments at a cost of more than 2 million rubles ($62,500) each.

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