

# Zhirinovsky Is Nearly Barred From Oryol Race

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Zhirinovsky visiting a meat market in the city of Stavropol on Saturday. **Eduard Korniyenko**

A stamp in his passport almost cost Vladimir Zhirinovsky the chance to lead his Liberal Democratic Party at the polls in the Oryol region.

Zhirinovsky, 65, tops the electoral list for the party in regional legislature elections in Oryol, which are to take place on Dec. 4, the same day as the State Duma vote.

But the local election committee said Zhirinovsky was not eligible to run because his passport is voided by an incorrect marriage stamp.

Zhirinovsky married his wife, Galina Lebedeva, in 1971. The marriage stamp in his current passport only lists her birth year, without specifying the exact birth date, Sergei Ivanov, a State Duma deputy with the Liberal Democrats, explained by telephone Friday.

Similar technicalities could result in refusals for another 12 people on the 34-name Liberal

Democratic Party list, as well as 24 of the 53 Communist Party candidates, Kommersant [reported](#).

"That's a load of horse feathers," Ivanov said about the quibble, Interfax reported. But he told The Moscow Times in a separate interview that he believed "people in the election committee are sane and they will register Zhirinovsky".

Zhirinovsky told RIA-Novosti that he considered the election committee's threat "a provocation."

All Oryol candidates for both the Liberal Democrats and the Communists were eventually registered late Friday, hours after the scandal erupted in the media.

The head of the Central Election Commission, Vladimir Churov, weighed in on Saturday, [saying](#) validity of marriage stamps is no concern of his subordinates.

However, Vasily Ikonnikov, head of the Oryol region branch of the Communist Party, insisted that the issue was not a technicality but a failed attempt at leveraging administrative resources. He said the regional administration intended to remove competition that way because the Communists have strong support in the region, Kommersant reported. Oryol's election officials denied the allegation.

Ivanov said he faced a similar situation before, also in regional elections, when the local election committee tried to eradicate him from running because his internal passport had a stamp indicating his old foreign travel passport had been canceled. The stamp, made by the Federal Migration Service, can be found in the passports of millions of Russians.

In 2010, the local election committee in Samara unsuccessfully tried to ban three opposition candidates from running for mayorship because of the same stamps.

Whether the format of the marriage stamp is illegal also remained unclear. Three out of four Russian passport holders informally interviewed by The Moscow Times also had the stamp done the same way as Zhirinovsky's, with only the spouse's birth year specified.

Zhirinovsky has voiced no plans to take a seat in the Oryol legislature and is most likely running to attract votes for his party.

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