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Duma Backs Abortion Bill

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The State Duma has approved in a second reading a bill limiting abortions but rejected even tougher restrictions backed by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The bill approved Friday limits abortions to 12 weeks of pregnancy, except for women who say they can't afford a child, who may have an abortion up to 22 weeks. The bill also stipulates a mandatory waiting period of two to seven days before the procedure to allow a woman to reconsider her decision. The law does not include restrictions proposed by the Russian Orthodox Church, such as a requiring a husband's consent for married women, parents' consent for teenage girls or for a doctor's right to refuse an abortion.

The bill must pass a third and final reading before it can go to the Federation Council and then the president for approval.

(AP, MT)

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