

Poll: 47% Support for Putin in Presidential Vote Given 'Against All' Ballot Choice

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Less than half of voters would have supported Vladimir Putin in the March 4 presidential election if the "against all" option had been on the ballot, according to a poll released Thursday by the Levada Center.

Putin won the election with over 63 percent of the vote, thereby avoiding a runoff with the first runner-up. A second round would have resulted if no candidate had received a majority of votes.

Just under 47 percent of those polled in a national survey conducted last week by the Levada Center said they would support Putin if "against all" were an option on the presidential ballot. The second highest vote total in the poll went to "against all" with 24 percent, followed by Communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov with 10.8 percent.

The option of a protest vote was available on election ballots in Russia from 1991 until 2006.

The Levada Center poll also showed Putin's approval rating up slightly, to 68 percent compared to 65 percent in February, and the State Duma's approval level up to 42 percent, compared to 37 percent last month.

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