

National Anti-Gay Bill Submitted to Duma

By [Sergey Chernov](#)

March 29, 2012



The author of the St. Petersburg law, Vitaly Milonov, says he finds demonstrations of homosexuality "repellent." **Sergey Chernov**

A controversial bill banning the "promotion of homosexuality" to minors was introduced into the State Duma on Thursday, two weeks after similar legislation came into force in St. Petersburg.

Novosibirsk regional lawmakers submitted the bill, which calls for fines of up to 500,000 rubles (\$16,500) for promoting a gay lifestyle in the media and through "public activities that promote homosexuality as normal behavior."

"The propaganda of homosexuality is widespread in modern Russia," says a note attached to the bill, Interfax reported.

The legislation argues that exposure to a gay lifestyle is particularly dangerous for children

and teens who are not able to properly evaluate what they are seeing.

The bill will stir fears in the gay community about an increase in discrimination and a crackdown on every manifestation of homosexuality — from gay-pride events to the arts and media.

Several figures such as Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko have backed a national anti-gay law, although it remains unclear whether President-elect Vladimir Putin would support it. Similar laws are already in place in the regions of Ryazan, Arkhangelsk, Kostroma and, most recently, St. Petersburg, where a ban on "promoting sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality and transgenderism to minors" went into effect March 17.

The author of the St. Petersburg law, Vitaly Milonov, defended it in a telephone interview as being inspired by society's demands, not his own.

"If society believes that a model of behavior doesn't correspond to society's interests, then society reacts to it," said Milonov, a St. Petersburg deputy with Putin's United Russia party and an Orthodox religious activist. "I would be very happy if this bill isn't applied even once because it's not directed against anybody specifically or with regard to a specific case. But it does outline certain additional rules of behavior toward minors."

Milonov said he was personally offended by gay-pride events but said his own feelings had nothing to do with the law and that gays had every right to meet in public.

"I am profoundly against gay parades because I am an Orthodox Christian and the demonstration of the sin of Sodom is repellent to me," he said. "If, God forbid, I happened to see a crowd of those people — like they do in Berlin, I've seen photographs where men with all sorts of dildos are running around seminaked — it's natural that I'd try to take my children aside so they would not see this perversion.

"But I am a lawmaker, and I don't try to impose my personal and religious beliefs onto anybody," he said. "That's why I have no right to restrict the freedom of assembly, marches and demonstrations, because this freedom is guaranteed by Article 31 of the Constitution."

In reality, gay-pride events are usually banned in St. Petersburg and across the country under various pretexts.

Milonov is already working to enforce his law, warning Madonna last week that she faces a fine if she makes good on a promise to speak up for gays during a St. Petersburg concert in August. He also intends to complain to prosecutors about a local concert by the German rock band Rammstein last month.

"I'll ask prosecutors to evaluate this [concert] and probably take measures against the promoter," Milonov said. "There was an imitation of a homosexual act on stage and a nonimitation of sexual exposure — with a demonstration of male sexual parts.

"Rammstein is a matter of taste — some like sodomites, some like satanists, some like punks. It's silly to give a legal assessment of tastes. But the problem is that children older than 14 were allowed into the concert. The promoter should have warned people that the concert contained scenes of an erotic nature and restricted admission for children under 16 or maybe

even 18, but it wasn't done."

Milonov, who is a member of a parish council of a local Orthodox church, said he saw the video footage of the concert on a local news website.

"I couldn't even watch it to the end," he said. "I am not allowed to see such things, I am a church man, but this was shown to 14-year-old teenagers!"

St. Petersburg's law has been criticized as violating Russia's international human rights obligations. But Milonov downplayed this criticism as coming from an international gay lobby, and he insisted that he was an "extremely European man."

"I am fond of European culture, but I think that new things are emerging in Europe that are negative," he said. "European society emerged thanks to the Christians, to the Christian Democrats. Konrad Adenauer, Ludwig Erhard, Hanns Seidel — they would be horrified to see what values are presented now as the norm."

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/03/29/national-anti-gay-bill-submitted-to-duma-a13667>