

Moscow Wants to Make Anti-Sex Law Federal

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The Moscow City Duma building. **Maxim Stulov**

Deputies of the Moscow City Duma discussing the creation of an anti-gay law similar to the one in St. Petersburg have decided to broaden its scope to ban all kinds of "sexual propaganda," and they said they plan to push the initiative on the federal level.

City Duma Speaker Vladimir Platonov proposed the idea and stressed its importance during a round table meeting attended by representatives of regions where laws restricting homosexual propaganda among minors have already been enacted.

But the legislation would also ban the spread of materials of a heterosexual nature. Representatives of parental organizations said the law was not aimed at people of non-traditional sexual orientation, but a necessary step to protect children from information that would produce psychological harm, a news release about the discussion on the City Duma website said.

Platonov was adamant about the need to protect children's rights.

"If we talk about the simple writing of the law, it would be possible to limit distribution of the material and harvest already-existing experience," he said, adding that it would be possible to just "take up a pen and write the same law accepted by four subjects of the Federation," the news release said.

Platonov also said it was necessary to "address to the Federation Council in order to prepare a good federal legislative initiative that would protect minors from all the negative information."

One demonstrator stood outside the City Duma in a one-man picket to protest the discussion, holding a sign reading "Stop homophobic crooks! Moscow is behind us," Moskovskiy Komsomolets reported.

Gay rights activists said Tuesday they are planning a parade for May 27 to protest the advance of anti-homosexual legislation in Russia.

"Notification of the event will be filed and submitted to the capital's mayor, Sergei Sobyenin, in mid-May," founder of the Moscow Gay Pride movement Nikolai Alekseyev told Interfax. "The main theme will be the legislative bans on gay propaganda in Russia," he said.

The parade is also timed to coincide with the 19th anniversary of the abolition of criminal prosecution for engaging in homosexual relations, Alekseev said.

Under the law that took effect in St. Petersburg in March, anyone found guilty of promoting homosexuality among minors can be fined from 5,000 (\$170) to 50,000 rubles, or up to 500,000 rubles for legal entities.

The Ryazan, Kostroma, and Arkhangelsk regions have also enacted similar legislation.

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