

# Region Considers Pursuing Prostitution Clientele

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The Belgorod region Duma will consider a law aimed at punishing both prostitutes and their clients

Belgorod region Duma deputies hope to combat prostitution by putting forward a bill which would punish the client a, as well as prostitutes themselves, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported Friday.

"The actions of people who receive sexual services on a commercial basis are also unlawful," the document wrote. "It is an obstacle for the fight with prostitution."

But the document proposes that those caught only receive a fine of 1500-2000 rubles (\$50-66).

Prostitution has also proven difficult to catch. Moscow police figures show that since 1997, 21,936 prostitutes have been arrested and fined for infractions, but only 263 of those were actually fined for prostitution, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported. The others were fined for different violations due to a lack of evidence for prostitution.

The bill has yet to be examined by the Belgorod Duma, but Just Russia deputy Alexander Ageyev has called it "controversial," because he believes that it does not address the main problem of those who organize prostitution.

"First of all, we must toughen the punishment for trading prostitutes and take the fight to organized prostitution," he said.

United Russia spokesman Vyacheslav Lysakov said that he sees sense in the bill.

"There is clear logic in the Belgorod proposal because it's obvious that demand creates supply," he said.

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