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Nationalist Lawmakers Suggest Branding Drunk Drivers

By The Moscow Times

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A group of lawmakers are backing a range of tough new measures to crack down on drunk drivers, including branding the letter "П" for "drunkard" on their hands, stamping their passports and punching a hole in their driver's licenses.

"It is essential that we create a cult of intolerance to drunk driving, and for this we need a multifaceted approach to the issue," Yaroslav Nilov, a lawmaker with the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, told Izvestia.

"Although branding someone's hand is a radical measure, the very possibility of its application in hard-to-wash-off paint should stop drunk drivers from wanting to get behind the wheel," Nilov said.

Aside from branding offending drivers, lawmakers from Nilov's party, which currently has 56 seats in the 450-seat lower house, are proposing introducing special license plates for drunk

drivers, fines for aggressive driving and confiscating offender's cars.

They are also seeking harsher prison sentences for drunk drivers involved in road accidents, raising jail terms to a maximum of nine years if one person dies in the crash and to 15 years if two or more people are killed.

LDPR lawmakers have already sent letters outlining their recommendations to Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, the head of the traffic police and the country's deputy police chief, Izvestia reported.

The ruling United Russia party is also backing tougher penalties for drunk driving, although they have merely proposed hiking fines and extending prison sentences.

This is not the first time that LDPR deputies have publicly backed branding as a punishment for criminal offenses.

Two years ago, members of the party's State Duma faction suggested branding officials caught taking bribes. On that occasion, they proposed branding the letter "К" on official's hands.

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