

Putin Sets Parliamentary Address for Mid-December

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President Putin meeting with the heads of the four State Duma factions at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence on Friday.

President Vladimir Putin told leaders of the four State Duma factions that he would make his state-of-the-nation address in mid-December.

The address is traditionally held in November, but a Kremlin source told Kommersant in late October that the address might be delayed amid disputes about its content.

The faction heads met Putin on Friday at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence and asked him to speak in his address about broadening the powers of the State Duma, a controversial education bill and a new building for the Duma, according to a transcript of the meeting posted on the Kremlin [website](#).

Putin said the Constitution could be amended to introduce direct popular elections for Federation Council members and that the transportation tax could be abolished in favor of a higher excise tax for gasoline, Svobodnaya Pressa reported Friday.

Putin's meeting with the lawmakers lasted several hours, Svobodnaya Pressa said. The transcript of the meeting on the Kremlin website took 23 pages.

State Duma Speaker and United Russia faction leader Sergei Naryshkin said his party was concerned by the authority of some government officials to change the state budget without consulting the Duma. Naryshkin asked Putin to allow lawmakers to take part in drafting federal programs and spoke in favor of increasing the Duma's control mechanisms, without elaborating.

Naryshkin said the new education bill should set a minimum average wage for teachers, compensate rural teachers for their expenses on housing and utilities and provide additional education for children at the state's expense.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov asked Putin to take into account his party's amendments to the education bill and change the criteria by which a university's efficiency are assessed, Svobodnaya Pressa reported.

Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky said the State Duma needed a new building "where there is clean air," the news site said.

Zhirinovsky asked Putin to remove the manslaughter charge from the Criminal Code in connection with the case of recently convicted mixed-martial-arts champion Rasul Mirzayev. The flamboyant nationalist also defended rural markets where people can "bargain" over prices, as opposed to supermarkets where the prices are fixed.

A Just Russia leader Sergei Mironov said university education and maternity leave had to be taken into account along with a person's job experience when authorities calculate his retirement allowance. Mironov also supported raising excise taxes for alcohol, the newspaper said.

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