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Putin Signs Law Ordering Officials to Account for Spending

By The Moscow Times

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President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed into law legislation ordering state officials to prove the legality of their spending and that of their spouses and underage children over a three-year period.

The law, which comes into force on Jan. 1, 2013, will oblige government officials to provide evidence that their spending doesn't exceed their incomes.

If their spending is judged to exceed their incomes, their purchases will be confiscated by the courts, according to a statement on the Kremlin website.

The bill complements legislation already on the books requiring officials to declare their incomes, a measure that critics have said is ineffectual without a requirement to declare expenses as well.

The legislation comes amid a wave of corruption scandals in various government bodies, including the alleged embezzlement of almost $100 million from Defense Ministry-controlled agencies. Earlier this month, Putin cited that investigation in dismissing Anatoly Serdyukov from his post as defense minister.

While the law covers the president, it doesn't affect members of his administration, which includes some former governmental ministers.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told RIA-Novosti that the legislation eventually might cover the presidential administration as well.

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