The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Senate Considering Magnitsky Bill on Wednesday

By The Moscow Times

December 04, 2012



The United States Senate on Wednesday will consider the combined trade and human rights bill that would permanently grant most favored nation status to Russia and at the same time impose sanctions on Russian human rights violators.

The text is the same as that which was passed by the House of Representatives last month.

Foreign Affairs Ministry human rights commissioner Konstantin Dolgov on Wednesday called the potential law "an absolutely unfriendly step, certainly provocative and one sided, which is undoubtedly designed to affect the rights of a corresponding category of Russian citizens — a selective measure," Interfax reported.

It's not clear if a vote will occur on Wednesday, but the bill is expected to be approved, after which it will go to President Barack Obama for his signature and accomplish one of the major trade goals of American companies eyeing greater exports and investments in Russia.

The House version bars Russian human rights violators from receiving visas and freezes their U.S.-based financial assets. An earlier Senate version applied to human rights violators around the world.

On Tuesday, Sen. Ben Cardin, who authored the Senate version, indicated that he was willing to accept the House approach so that the bill could be passed, The Associated Press reported. "This bill may only apply to Russia, but it sets a standard that should be applied globally," Cardin said in a statement. "I encourage other nations to follow our lead."

Russia on Aug. 22 formally entered the World Trade Organization, requiring it to lower its import tariffs, better protect intellectual property and provide greater foreign access to its service industry. But unless Congress gets rid of existing trade restrictions and makes normal trade relations permanent, U.S. companies cannot enjoy the new trade rules available to the WTO's other 155 members.

Related articles:

- Shuvalov Says Magnitsky Response Won't Affect Trade
- Why Obama Should Sign the Magnitsky Act
- Putin's Tough Response to the Magnitsky Act

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/12/04/senate-considering-magnitsky-bill-on-wednesday-a19917