

Activists Picket Duma Ahead of 'Anti-Magnitsky' Vote

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Several dozen people were detained for picketing the State Duma on Wednesday morning, ahead of a vote that would pave the way for a ban on U.S. citizens adopting Russian children.

Interfax reported that police had detained roughly 30 people, the majority of whom held one-man pickets outside the country's lower house of parliament, by early afternoon. Employees from news outlets including Vedomosti, Ekho Moskvyy and Bolshoi Gorod were among those detained, online news portal Lenta.ru said.

In an effort to push the pickets away from the Duma building, police cordoned off nearby streets including Ulitsa Bolshaya Dmitrovka and Okhotny Ryad. Kommersant FM reported that police officers only moved to detain activists after they strayed closer than 50 meters to one another.

According to Russian law, one-man pickets don't have to be sanctioned by authorities, unlike

other forms of protest. But pickets must take place a minimum of 50 meters from one another for them to be legal.

As the detentions began Wednesday, the bill that would ban U.S. adoptions became the top trending topic on Russian Twitter, where it earned the hashtag "scoundrels' law" (#zakonpodletsov).

Prominent public figures including former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin, the head of the Kremlin's human rights council, Mikhail Fedotov, and billionaire businessman and politician Mikhail Prokhorov have publicly opposed the bill, which is seen as a response to the Magnitsky Act passed by the U.S. Senate in early December.

The U.S. legislation calls for a blacklist of Russian officials allegedly involved in the prison death of anti-corruption lawyer Sergei Magnitsky. Individuals on the list, as well as other human rights violators in Russia, will be denied visas to the United States and have their assets there frozen.

The Russian response is named after 2-year-old Dima Yakovlev, a Russian boy who died in the U.S. after his adoptive father left him alone in a car for nine hours.

The "Dima Yakovlev bill" has already passed a first reading, and the second is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m.

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