

United Russia Deputy Surrenders Seat Amid Scandal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A United Russia heavyweight accused of having undeclared property assets in the United States has voluntarily given up his seat in the State Duma.

Vladimir Pekhtin, the former head of the Duma's Credentials and Ethics Commission, said Wednesday that he would leave his post, Izvestia reported, citing the deputy.

"I don't want to damage the party's reputation," Pekhtin said, adding that he would "fight" to clear his name.

The move follows accusations by anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny last week that Pekhtin failed to declare property assets worth more than \$2 million in Miami, Florida.

Duma deputies are required to disclose financial records and information on their incomes.

Pekhtin stepped down as chairman of the Duma's Credentials and Ethics Commission

immediately after the allegations were made, but said at that time that it was only temporary.

According to the current system, Pekhtin's seat will be given to a Duma deputy who follows him on the party's election list.

It is unclear if Pekhtin gave up his seat voluntarily or was under pressure from the Kremlin to do so.

Some experts say that Pekhtin — who prior to his tenure in the Duma held senior positions in the hydro industry — might be given a job at state-owned RusHydro.

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