

Court Independence Bill Submitted Minus Key Amendments

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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New legislation aimed at ensuring the independence of judges considering cases filed by individuals against government institutions fell short of expectations after key amendments failed to make it into the final version of the bill, a news report said Thursday.

Despite its commitment to spend 65 billion rubles on relocating the Supreme Court and the Supreme Arbitration Court from Moscow to St. Petersburg, the Kremlin elected not to establish special court districts in a separate location from the government agencies that they often must scrutinize in cases brought by citizens, Kommersant reported, citing unidentified sources.

Creating a separate system of the so-called court districts would have "maximally ensured the independence of judges considering administrative lawsuits from government officials" and improved the procedure for settling disputes between citizens and government agencies, the report said.

But the final version of the bill for the new Code of Administrative Court Proceedings — which is currently pending approval by the State Duma — was submitted without the proposal to separate the courts from local authorities.

The final version instead stipulates that "courts will continue to consider lawsuits against the government institutions that are often located in the same building, in line with the geographical division," Kommersant reported.

The bill was drafted by the Supreme Court at the order of President Vladimir Putin.

Putin sent the bill to the State Duma on Wednesday, according to a statement on the Kremlin's website.

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