

Law on 'Homosexual Propaganda' Set for Duma Approval

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A supporter of the 'homosexual propaganda' law standing outside the State Duma. **Vadim Sidorov**

The controversial legislation banning "homosexual propaganda" is expected to be passed by the State Duma amid protests from gay-rights activists.

The legislation will ban the distribution of any information that could attract the attention of children toward gay topics, while an amendment introducing a system of fines for offenders has already been approved, RIA-Novosti reported.

Citizens found guilty of distributing propaganda to children regarding gay issues can be fined up to 5,000 rubles (\$154). If the offender uses the internet or mass media the fine could reach 100,00 rubles.

Legal entities will have to pay up to 1 million rubles (\$30,000) or suspend their activities for 90 days if they are in breach of the legislation.

State Duma Deputy Yelena Mizulina told Channel 5 that the legislation will also target foreign

citizens who could be deported after serving 15 days administrative arrest. They will also be subject to the same financial penalties.

Over the last year the number of Russians supporting the ban on "homosexual propaganda" increased from 86 to 88 percent, according to a poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Interfax reported.

Of the 1,600 people in 42 regions who took part in the survey only 7 percent said they were against the ban.

Meanwhile, about 20 protesters have been detained by police for taking part in an "unsanctioned rally" outside the Duma building, Interfax reported.

Lawmakers are divided on the legislation as Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of nationalist LDPR party, said Monday that it "brings too much attention" to the issue. However, he said that his party would support it anyway to "end talks" on the subject.

Russia's human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin warned that enforcement of the new laws could create serious problems, saying that "rigid and unwise enforcement can lead to loss of life and human tragedies."

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