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# Russia's Birth Rate Up 30% Since 2007

By The Moscow Times

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The birth rate in Russia grew 30 percent since 2007, the Minister of Labor and Social Protection Maxim Topilin said on Wednesday.

In his interview with the Ekho Moskvy radio station, the minister attributed the trend in part to the introduction of the so-called "maternity capital" on January 1, 2007.

"During this period, the birth rate increased by 30 percent," Topilin said without giving the exact figures. Growth was attributed "to the introduction of the maternity capital, among other things."

In a bid to encourage families to have more than one child, all women who gave birth to their second child after January 1, 2007 are eligible for a government-issued benefit of almost 409,000 rubles (about $12,600).

The benefit is not paid in cash, but parents can spend the money to improve their housing conditions, pay for their children's education or put the money towards a pension.

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