

Human Rights Group Condemns Duma Bill Targeting LGBT Parents

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The advocacy group Human Rights First has called on the State Duma to reject a bill which would allow the state to seize children from parents suspected of "nontraditional" sexual relations.

"The newly-proposed amendments to the family code perpetuate the discrimination and stigmatization of gay Russians and are an attack on families in general, because they empower the government to strip individuals of parental rights for ambiguously-defined noncriminal behavior," the New York-based NGO's Innokenty Grekov said in a press release Wednesday.

Grekov noted that the legislation fails to define "nontraditional sexual relations," and also does not specify how these relations might be established in a court of law, making the proposed amendments particularly open to abuse.

The bill in question, which was submitted on Sept. 6 by State Duma Deputy Alexei Zhuravlyov would add a paragraph to Article 69 of the Family Code enabling the government to consider parents' sexual orientation when determining whether a child should be taken into state custody.

The proposal came only months after President Vladimir Putin signed into law two controversial bills — a now notorious ban on propagandizing "nontraditional" sexual relations and another prohibiting the adoption of Russian children by same-sex couples.

In a report released in August, Human Rights First related the curtailing of LGBT rights in Russia to a sweeping crackdown on dissenting elements and civil society in general, noting that the Kremlin had been firmly opposed to proposals similar to the adopted legislation in the mid-2000s.

"Back then, the ambiguous language of the 'propaganda' bills was condemned by the Prime Minister's Office as contradictory to Russia's Constitution and criminal code and the European Convention on Human Rights," the press release said.

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