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Putin Submits Bill to Unite Courts

By The Moscow Times

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President Vladimir Putin has submitted a bill to the State Duma to merge the Supreme Arbitration Court into the Supreme Court, the Kremlin said on its website.

The bill — introduced to the lower house of parliament on Monday — would abolish the Supreme Arbitration Court and pass its power to settle economic disputes to the Supreme Court over a six month period. The number of Supreme Court judges would rise from 125 to 170.

The legislation would also give the president and senators more power to choose prosecutors.

Under the Constitution, the president nominates the prosecutor general for approval by the Federation Council, but the amendments would mean that future deputies of the prosecutor general and regional prosecutors would also be appointed via the same method, RBC Daily reported Tuesday.

The prosecutor general is currently responsible for nominating his deputies and regional

prosecutors.

Putin first came up with the proposal to unite the two courts at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June, saying it would contribute to the "humanization of criminal law."

The legislation would be considered before the year's end, Duma Deputy Speaker Alexander Zhukov told Interfax.

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