

Putin Signs Abortion Advertisement Ban

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral. Putin's policies chime with the Church's socially conservative agenda. **Denis Abramov / Vedomosti**

President Vladimir Putin has signed a law banning advertisements for abortion, the Kremlin said, a step activists said would infringe on the reproductive rights of women.

Putin has made stemming a post-Soviet population decline a priority during 14 years in power and struck a conservative tone in his new term, praising what he calls traditional values and holding up the Russian Orthodox Church as a moral guide.

He has drawn fire from the West for a law he signed earlier this year that critics say discriminates against homosexuals.

Wider availability of contraception and a resurgence of religion after the 1991 Soviet collapse have reduced Russia's abortion rate, but it is among the highest in the world and termination is a top method of birth control.

The government has funded advertising campaigns and offered financial incentives for couples to have multiple children.

The law banning advertising, whose signing was announced Monday, "is not the beginning of the restriction of women's [reproductive] rights, but rather the continuation of a process begun in 2011," said women's rights activist Olga Kharitonova.

She was referring to legislation that barred abortions after the 12th week of pregnancy in most cases and established a waiting period of at least 48 hours.

A recent proposal submitted to lawmakers would prohibit coverage of abortion by health insurance.

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