

Communist Politician Proposes to Ban Cigarette Sales to Women Under 40

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Communist lawmaker has introduced a bill that would ban the sale of tobacco to women under the age of 40, prompting indignation from his colleagues at the "criminal" attempt to restrict women's rights, a news report said.

The bill introduced by State Duma lawmaker Ivan Nikitchuk cites the need to "protect mothers and children from the effects of tobacco use," according to its listing on the legislature's website.

The proposed expansion of Russia's recent ban on smoking in restaurants and other public facilities would prohibit cigarette sales to women under 40 and would ban smoking by women of any age within sight of minors, RIA Novosti reported.

The gender-based restrictions drew outrage from the head of the State Duma's Health Affairs Committee, Sergei Kalashnikov, who said the proposal was "doomed" and would never be passed, RIA Novosti reported.

"This is a criminal bill," Kalashnikov was quoted as saying. "It's a total segregation of women under 40, and of all women. They are presented here [in the bill] as legally incompetent, as second-rate people and so on. What kind of nonsense is this? In a normal society, lawmakers would be called to account for this."

While some State Duma lawmakers such as the Liberal Democratic Party's flamboyant leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky have advanced gender-insensitive proposals in the past, the track record of Russia's Communist lawmakers is less infamous.

Nikitchuk's Soviet-era Communist predecessors sharply restricted the rights of the country's citizens, but men and women were seen as equals in the political and economic rights they had in the Soviet Union. Scores of women held senior managerial positions and government offices and advanced in respected professions such as medicine, law or even space exploration.

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