

Putin Changes Constitution to Strengthen Grip on Senators

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a law adding seats to Russia's Federation Council, the upper house of parliament.

According to the new law, the Constitution will be amended to allow the president to appoint 17 senators, thus boosting the composition of the Federation Council by 10 percent.

Also, senators appointed by one president will be exempt from dismissal by the succeeding president for the duration of his first term in office.

An explanatory note for the original bill said the move was intended to "provide additional conditions to attain a balance of powers."

The law also stipulates that senators appointed by judicial or executive organs will have a mandate corresponding to the mandate of the appointing state body.

The law will take effect as soon as it is officially published by state newspaper Rossiiskaya

Gazeta.

The bill was approved by both the Federation Council and the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, in late May.

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