

# Kurgan Election Official Exposes Candidate as His Ex-Prison Inmate

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A Kurgan political hopeful who had attempted to dodge Russia's new ban on ex-convicts running for office was exposed by a fellow inmate who is now a free man, serving as an election official.

Vladimir Muratov claimed he had no criminal convictions when registering to run in a district election in the Kurgan region, Znak.com news website reported Friday.

But an unnamed member of the regional election commission came forward claiming he had served time in a local prison with Muratov, who was jailed for an unspecified felony back in the 1970s, the report said.

The commission requested that the Federal Security Service confirm the information. Their reply remains pending as of this article's publication.

A law banning candidates from running for office if they have a criminal record was passed in February. It does not apply to election officials.

Critics said it targeted federal opposition leaders such as Alexei Navalny and Sergei Udaltsov, both of whom were recently hit by criminal cases they claimed were fabricated in retribution for their anti-Kremlin campaigning.

But 47 district votes — where politics tend to play second fiddle to municipal affairs — were canceled in the Kurgan region alone because of a lack of candidates after dozens were weeded out over their criminal pasts, news site Ura.ru said earlier this month.

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