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Lawmaker Wants Russian Travel Ban on Apple's Gay CEO Tim Cook

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Apple CEO Tim Cook holds an iPad during a presentation at Apple headquarters in Cupertino, California.

Conservative lawmaker Vitaly Milonov has slammed Apple's CEO Tim Cook for coming out as gay on Thursday, saying the chief executive should be banned from entering Russia because he could have AIDS.

"What could he bring us? The Ebola virus, AIDS, gonorrhea? They all have unseemly ties over there, prohibit their [homosexuals'] entry forever," Milonov, a prominent anti-gay campaigner, told the FlashNord news site on Thursday.

Milonov, a member of the ruling United Russia party who sits on St. Petersburg's legislative assembly and is the architect of what later became Russia's gay propaganda law, also called Cook "a shrewd politician" for delaying his public coming out until now.

"He's like an artist, who at first popularized himself and then revealed himself to be gay," Milonov was quoted as saying by FlashNord, using a highly offensive term for homosexuals.

It remains to be seen whether Cook's announcement will affect sales of Apple products in Russia, as well as in markets in other traditionally conservative countries.

The Russian government last year adopted a law banning the "promotion of nontraditional sexual relations" to minors though homosexuality is not illegal in Russia.

Cook, 53, who has headed Apple since 2011, revealed his sexuality in an essay published Wednesday by the Bloomberg Businessweek magazine.

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