The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

St. Petersburg Lawmaker Wants Law Requiring Couples to Marry in Traditional Clothes

November 13, 2014

Two brides attend their wedding ceremony to each other at the wedding registry office in St. Petersburg on Nov. 7, 2014.

Conservative politician Vitaly Milonov is preparing a bill that would oblige couples to dress in traditional attire on their wedding day, after a transgender woman married her girlfriend while wearing a dress last week.

Milonov, a St. Petersburg lawmaker with the ruling United Russia party, took particular offense at the wedding in his city of the two "brides," one of whom was born as a man but is currently undergoing hormone therapy as part of her transition to become a female.

Russia does not recognize homosexual marriages, but a loophole in the law — the bride was still identified as male in her passport — meant that the ceremony was able to go ahead.

Milonov, a staunch opponent of gay rights, told the Izvestia newspaper Thursday that he was

concerned the nontraditional wedding would set a precedent for others to follow.

"At present ... there is a dress code by which everyone must abide when visiting state institutions. Therefore, one should not dress inappropriately when visiting [any] event associated with a change in one's civil status," he was quoted as saying.

Milonov reiterated that while he was happy for people to wear whatever they wanted on their wedding day, they should be obliged to wear formal attire at official ceremonies.

"It's a matter of culture and education. ... We will not allow people dressed in clothes [associated] with the opposite sex or beach clothes to register their marriage at the registry office. Except for when that clothing is an element of their culture or of ethnic origin," Milonov told Izvestia.

The "two-bride" wedding in St. Petersburg last week was the second such marriage to take place in Russia in recent months.

In August, a man who identifies as female married his girlfriend while wearing a floor-length gown to the frustration of the local registry office, which was nevertheless forced to acknowledge the union.

Milonov said that after his draft bill had been looked at by the St. Petersburg legislature, he would forward it to State Duma for consideration.

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