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Russian Debt Collectors Could Be Banned From Seizing Family Pets

By The Moscow Times

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Collectors may soon be prohibited from seizing the high-end household pets of debtors who have defaulted on their loans.

A bill to prohibit the alarming debt-collecting trend has been submitted to the State Duma for consideration.

Oleg Mikheyev, the Just Russia party lawmaker who drafted the bill, slammed the practice of pet confiscations, describing the practice as on par with hostage taking, the TASS news agency reported Monday.

"In St. Petersburg they seized a pedigree dog for debts, in Irkutsk — two pugs and a bulldog, in Kemerovo — a kitten, and in Altai they managed to place a parrot under house arrest," Mikheyev was quoted as saying.

"The more people default on their debts due to the recession, the more willing debt collectors will be to use this measure," Mikheyev was cited as saying after the legislation was submitted.

Mikheyev warned that while the practice of seizing pets has proven to be effective, it only creates more problems down the line. The debtors often rack up new debts in desperation to get their animals back, Mikheyev said, leading them down the path toward bankruptcy.

In late December, a Novosibirsk resident immediately coughed up the 12,000 rubles ($180) he owed to state collectors after they threatened to take off with his pedigree cat.

Earlier last year, court marshals in the Siberian region of Tomsk placed four Scottish Fold kittens under arrest to get their owner to pay up.

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