

Naryshkin Suggests Cutting Pay for Lawmakers to Fight Crisis

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian State Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin

The speaker of the State Duma has suggested cutting lawmakers' salaries to combat the country's economic crisis, a news report said Tuesday.

"We are facing adjustments to the budget, including adjustments to the cost estimates of the State Duma. I have asked all four factions of the Duma to discuss the issue of possibly reducing deputies' pay. If my proposal receives positive feedback, we will appeal to the president with the offer," State Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin was cited as saying by news agency RIA Novosti on Tuesday.

The Liberal Democratic Party has already responded favorably to Naryshkin's idea. Igor Lebedev, deputy speaker of the Duma, said "we [LDPR deputies] didn't even discuss this, we just notified our deputies that the decision has been made to reduce our salaries by 10 percent," the Interfax news agency reported.

United Russia head Vladimir Vasiliev also sounded off on the initiative, saying any salary reductions should be voluntary.

"I imagine this can be done voluntarily, and I am convinced that most deputies are ready to do so," Vasiliev said in comments carried by Interfax.

He also said, however, that the idea should be discussed with all deputies before any corresponding decree is issued.

Nikolai Kovalev, another United Russia deputy, said Naryshkin's proposal was a good idea, since "deputies' salaries are too high" anyway, according to Interfax.

Earlier on Tuesday, Interfax cited an unidentified source in the Duma as saying the average salary for Duma deputies was about 360,000 rubles (\$5,700) a month. Many deputies are past or present businessmen, however, and so do not necessarily depend on their government salaries to sustain themselves.

Naryshkin's plan comes amid a proposal by Finance Minister Anton Siluanov to cut all government spending by 10 percent, with the exception of defense. Russia's economy is forecast to shrink by at least three percent this year, weighed down by ongoing Western sanctions and a precipitous dive in the price of oil, Russia's top export.

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