

Respected Moscow Lawmaker Annuls Dissertation Over Plagiarism Claims

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Vladimir Platonov

Moscow city lawmaker Vladimir Platonov, who served as the legislature's speaker for two decades, has asked his alma mater to annul his Ph.D. dissertation after critics claimed that parts of it were plagiarized.

Platonov, who received a doctorate in law from the distinguished Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow, said Wednesday that he made the decision to annul the dissertation because he is tired of defending himself over it.

"Within a year I will prepare a new text for my doctorate," Platonov wrote on his Facebook page. Platonov, who was speaker of the Moscow City Duma from 1994 to 2014, earned the doctorate in 2010.

His decision to annul the dissertation has been widely reported as one of the first instances of a government official voluntarily doing so after being accused of plagiarism.

Numerous Russian politicians, including President Vladimir Putin, have been accused of plagiarizing texts in their dissertations.

Dissernet, formed in 2012, is one of the most active grassroots organizations aimed at exposing plagiarism among Russian politicians. Dissernet began making the plagiarism claims against Platonov last year.

The organization has made similar accusations against about a third of the 120 lawmakers in the federal parliament's lower house, which is responsible for drafting and approving nationwide laws.

Dissernet has accused several other high-ranking political figures including Transportation Minister Maxim Sokolov, Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastrykin, children's ombudsman Pavel Astakhov and St. Petersburg Governor Georgy Poltavchenko.

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