

Russian Legislature Proposes Time Off for Honeymoons to Fight Demographic Crisis

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Newlyweds in Russia's second city could get an extra 10 days of paid vacation time, if the St. Petersburg City Duma gets its way.

The legislative body has passed an amendment to the Labor Code and submitted it to the State Duma for review requiring businesses to give employees who get married 10 days off for a honeymoon, pro-government daily Izvestia reported.

The proposed amendment reads: "Additional paid leave in the event of marriage may be used by an employee, not necessarily all at one time, up to 30 calendar days from the wedding."

The text also notes that the document was developed "to support families," and to provide "a guarantee, corresponding to the tradition in Russian society of ... vacations for newlyweds."

Members of the regional parliament suggested that the additional days could provide young

people an incentive to get married, and could also help increase the country's birthrate.

"One way or another, a bride and groom are going to take time off work for their wedding, although we've encountered situations where employers don't always give paid leave for that time, which becomes an obstacle to starting a family," said Andrei Anokhin, the author of the proposed amendment. The labor code currently allows employers to give workers up to five unpaid days off for a wedding, but Anokhin said unpaid leave was an additional burden for young families.

Mikhail Moiseyev, the deputy head of the State Duma's Committee on Labor, Social Policy and Veterans Affairs, said that the bill will be considered, but it is far from the committee's top priority. "It's a good initiative," Moiseyev said, Izvestia reported, "but we have more important tasks ahead of us — for example, more than 3,000 World War II veterans are still without housing."

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