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Anti-Gay Lawmaker Milonov Slams Senator Who Spoke Up for LGBT Rights in Russia

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Vitaly Milonov

Conservative politician Vitaly Milonov has denounced a senator who suggested Russia adopt a "don't ask, don't tell" policy to improve the acceptance of LGBT people, telling the Govorit Moskva radio station that he was unworthy of being called a Russian.

Milonov, a deputy in the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly who is known for his anti-gay stance, accused Senator Konstantin Dobrynin from the northern Arkhangelsk region of "possibly wishing to promote himself" ahead of upcoming elections by supporting LGBT rights.

"But this isn't a way to win fame, not through the betrayal of our country," Milonov told Govorit Moskva, adding "I don't even want to discuss this because I don't understand how a person with such views can call himself a Russian citizen."

Earlier Sunday, Dobrynin had commented on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to legalize gay marriage by telling Interfax that Russia could benefit from adopting a law based on the principles of "don't ask, don't tell," helping the country move toward a greater acceptance of the LGBT community by giving gay Russians greater privacy in their personal lives.

Milonov accused the senator of being out of touch with the rest of the country.

"All those boys with violins who got into politics, who never lived the life of an ordinary Russian, don't know what it is to go hungry," Milonov told Govorit Moskva. "But we are different people ... we live in Russia. Russia has never been a country that leans only on the principles of tolerance and liberalism."

It is not the first clash of words between Milonov and Dobrynin. Last November, the senator wrote on his LifeJournal account that Milonov had committed a handful of crimes during his time in public office, including wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "Orthodoxy or Death" which is banned Russia as extremist.

Dobrynin also said Milonov should be forced to undergo a mental health evaluation.

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