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# Russia's Putin Changes Date of 2016 Parliamentary Elections

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President Vladimir Putin has signed a law moving the date of Russia's upcoming parliamentary elections up by almost three months, the Kremlin said Wednesday.

Voters were supposed to head to the polls on the first Sunday in December to cast their ballots for the State Duma elections. The race to Russia's lower house of parliament will now take place on the third Sunday of September, according to a statement on the Kremlin's website.

The changes mean that regional and federal elections will now be held at the same time, minimizing inconvenience and maximizing voter turnout, the speaker for the Federation Council — Russia's upper house of parliament — Valentina Matviyenko, was quoted as saying earlier this month by Kommersant.

Deputies who will not be returned to the Duma in the upcoming elections will retain parliamentary immunity and some social guarantees up until December, the Kremlin said in its statement.

The law was co-authored by the head of the ruling United Russia party, Vladimir Vasilyev, the

head of the LDPR, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, and the head of the A Just Russia party, Sergei Milonov, Kommersant reported.

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