

Ultraconservative Lawmaker Mizulina Drafts Law To Ban Russian Baby Boxes

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Yelena Mizulina

Ultraconservative lawmaker Yelena Mizulina has introduced a bill banning Russia's controversial baby boxes — incubator-type enclosures in which parents can leave unwanted newborns, the RBC news agency reported Friday.

Mizulina, a senator on the Federation Council, claimed that the boxes could lead to the growing number of abandoned babies and a greater risk of child trafficking. She also raised concerns for the children left in the boxes, who would be unable to trace their biological parents.

Russia's infanticide rate has dropped from 149 to 72 over the past 7 years, falling by 10 percent on average every year. The trend has not been affected by the baby boxes, but by a radical change in government policy towards the family, procreation and children's education, Mizulina said.

Any organization breaking the law would face a fine of up to five million rubles (\$15,000) or

90 day suspension of activity.

There are currently 19 baby box schemes functioning across 12 Russian regions. The first services were introduced in 2011 by the charitable foundation Cradle of Hope, based in the central Russian region of Perm.

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