

# Russian State Duma Strips Opposition Deputy Ponomarev of His Powers

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ilya Ponomarev

The Russian State Duma voted to strip opposition deputy Ilya Ponomarev of his powers for not fulfilling his duties, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Friday.

The vote concluded with 413 deputies for and three against, all three coming from the A Just Russia opposition party: Dmitry Gudkov, Sergei Petrov, and Ponomarev himself, voting in absentia from the United States.

During the proceedings, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, alleged that Ponomarev is leading anti-Russian propaganda and acting against the interests of the country.

The A Just Russia party presented the initiative, and concluded that Ponomarev has not come to the Duma in two years, has not been working with constituents, and has not been

communicating with the party. Ponomarev refutes these claims, Vedomosti reported.

Ponomarev was the only deputy in the Duma who voted against the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. When he traveled to California soon after, his bank accounts were frozen and he was allegedly prohibited from traveling abroad. He has not returned to Russia since then, according to The New York Times.

In 2015 the Duma stripped him of parliamentary immunity, charged and arrested him in absentia for the embezzlement of \$750,000 from the state-funded scientific and technological Skolkovo Foundation. Ponomarev had worked with Skolkovo as a lecturer, and in 2011-12 he managed part of the foundation's projects while working closely with then-President Dmitry Medvedev.

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