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Russian Political Party Stands By Transgender Voting Precinct Worker

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The Just Russia political party says it will not try to remove Yekaterina Messorosh from a local voting precinct commission in St. Petersburg because of Messorosh's recent sex reassignment surgery, according to report by the Baltika radio station.

"We believe that every person has the right to privacy, so long as it does not interfere with their professional activity. We're not going to get into this Milonov stuff, and we won't comment further," Just Russia's regional press office said in a statement.

Vitaly Milonov, perhaps Russia's best known critic of gay rights and the instigator of the country's ban on so-called "gay propaganda" in the presence of minors, has called for Messorosh to be barred from working in the voting precinct on Sept. 18, when Russia holds national parliamentary elections.

"This person doesn't understand if he's a man or a woman. As soon as someone starts having problems like that, he starts counting every checkmark on the ballots as votes for the

Libertarian Party," Milonov complained in a radio interview.

Speaking to the tabloid website Life, Messorosh said she wants to do her part to improve Russia's elections. "I think what's happening in the electoral sphere should be better," she explained, adding "at least with some concrete work at a voting station I can help make the elections a little better, if just a bit."

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