

The Richest Man in Russia's Parliament Does What Donald Trump Won't and Pays the Price

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Andrei Palkin / Vkontakte

Andrei Palkin, the man who earned more money in 2015 than anybody else serving in the Russian parliament, says he's had to declare bankruptcy after a real estate sale saddled him with massive tax debt.

According to the RBC news agency, Palkin says he was required to sell off the apartments and equipment that were part of his business, due to a ban on State Duma deputies practicing entrepreneurial activities while in office.

Palkin sold off his real estate, and the buyer is paying for the apartments in a 15-year installment plan. The day after he registered the transaction, however, Palkin was hit with taxes for the entire value of the sale — meaning the government demanded money he wouldn't have for years to come.

Within three days, Palkin says Russian tax officials dispatched court bailiffs to seize the remainder of his property and freeze his previously committed business transactions.

The Duma deputy says he's working now to reach an agreement to restructure his tax debt, hopefully buying him a year to settle the matter, but it requires declaring bankruptcy to unfreeze his assets.

Palkin now says he regrets joining the parliament. "To be honest, I thought I would hand over everything to a trust, but it's not allowed — it turns out only LLCs can do that, and I'm just an entrepreneur," he told RBC, before consoling himself with the knowledge that U.S. President Donald Trump has declared bankruptcy four times, Palkin said.

In fact, between 1990 and 2009, Trump's companies declared bankruptcy [six times](#).

Analyzing the income declarations of members of the State Duma, RBC determined that Palkin earned 1.5 billion rubles (\$25.3 million) in 2015 alone — more money than any other deputy now in office. According to official documents, Palkin owned 56 apartments and more than 200 vehicles.

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