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New Russian Bill Hopes to Ban Social Networks for Children Under 14

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Sergei Porter / Vedomosti

Russian children under the age of 14 could soon be banned from signing up to social networks online, thanks to a new bill submitted to the Russian parliament on Monday.

The bill, submitted by ultra-conservative Russian lawmaker Vitaly Milonov, would require users to submit their passport details before creating an account.

The legislation also hopes to ban the use of pseudonyms and set out strict rules requiring two-party consent before publishing screenshots of online correspondence, Russian news website Meduza reported.

Milonov, who also pioneered Russia's infamous "gay propaganda law" in 2013, said that the virtual domain needed to be better regulated.

“Social networks create a special virtual world where a person spends significant part of their life, contacting other people and essentially doing everything that they would do in

real world. This [virtual] world can't be left unregulated by law. Especially now, when growing number of users are falling victim to different types of fraud," the bill reads.

Just under two-thirds of Russians (62 percent) support the ban on social networks for children, while 39 percent supported using passport data to create an online account, a poll by the state-funded pollster VTsIOM revealed Monday.

Social media has come under increasing scrutiny in Russia in recent months, with lawmakers and parents raising concerns on the existence of various "death groups:" online communities on Russian social network VKontakte which reportedly encourage teenagers to take their own lives.

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