

U.S. Ambassador Huntsman Disappointed by Russia's Foreign Media Bill

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John Huntsman (Mikhail Japaridze / TASS)

U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman says he's disappointed by a new bill that targets foreign news outlets, passed in response to Kremlin-backed news channel RT's registration as a "foreign agent" in the United States.

Russian senators voted overwhelmingly in favor of the bill earlier on Wednesday, a week after the lower house of parliament passed without a single dissenting voice. After being signed into law by President Vladimir Putin, news outlets that receive funding from abroad may be branded "foreign agents."

The country's Justice Ministry has reportedly warned two U.S.-funded news outlets they may be added to the list before the upper house took the bill up for consideration. The designation would require foreign outlets to disclose their status, report their activities and agree to

financial inspections.

Non-compliant foreign news organizations could be blocked in Russia without a court order.

Related article: [How Russia's Foreign Agent Law Cracks Down on U.S. Media \(Op-ed\)](#)

Ambassador Huntsman [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency that the bill could weaken the voice of media in the lives of the Russian people.

Previously, Huntsman [criticized](#) Russia's draft bill as more punitive than the U.S. foreign agent law, despite high-level Russian officials' assertions that they are taking reciprocal steps.

Officials in the U.S. say that RT's registration under the 1938 anti-Nazi propaganda law will not limit the network's ability to work in the country, but will only require the outlet to disclose its mission and funding.

"That's far different from designating somebody a foreign agent," Huntsman [said](#) last week. "And effectively making it virtually impossible for them to operate."

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