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Russia Raises Minimum Wage 43% Ahead of Presidential Elections

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Dmitry Rogulin / TASS

Russian lawmakers have passed legislation raising the minimum wage ahead of schedule and slightly over a month before the presidential elections by up to 43%.

With elections approaching March 18, President Vladimir Putin had previously pledged to raise the minimum wage to the minimum subsistence level by late spring.

The bill that passed its third and final reading in the State Duma on Friday is set to raise the minimum wage to 11,163 rubles ($198) by May 1, 2018.

The Duma's Twitter account said Russia's lowest-earning income bracket would earn 43 percent more after the changes than what they earned last year.

The latest increase adds nearly 2,000 rubles to the minimum wage and brings it level to the minimum subsistence level.

Later on Friday, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said the government would subsidize

regions unable to finance the minimum wage increase, the RBC business portal reported.

Russian consumers' real wages have decreased for four years straight in 2017, despite the national economy climbing out of recession following western sanctions and falling oil prices.

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