

Ruling Party Members Told Not to Criticize Pension Reform

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Kirill Kuhmar / TASS

Members of the United Russia ruling party have reportedly been instructed to sign a pledge promising not to criticize a controversial retirement age hike.

The Russian government set in motion plans to raise the retirement age for men and women over the next decade, arguing that the reform would ease pressure on the budget. The June 14 announcement, made during the opening evening of the World Cup, was met with widespread criticism.

“All party members were required to sign a pledge that they won’t criticize the reform until July 28,” an anonymous party member in the southwestern Russian region of Stavropol [told](#) the local Newstracker.ru news website Wednesday.

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Newstracker.ru previously [reported](#) that copies of a rural Stavropol newspaper were seized for covering the pension reform in defiance of “strong recommendations” by the regional administration.

The unnamed United Russia member in Stavropol cited federal party leader Andrei Turchak’s announcement last week that “there can be no differing opinions on pension reform.”

Two anonymous State Duma deputies [relayed](#) Turchak’s demands at a closed-doors party meeting last week to the RBC business portal.

“Contradictory opinion in our ranks is inadmissible,” Turchak is said to have told the legislators. “The party will closely follow [regional activities], and everyone can be sure that relevant conclusions will be drawn for each such statement.”

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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