

Russian Duma Moves to Hike Retirement Age Amid Popular Opposition

July 19, 2018



Anton Novoderzhkin / TASS

Russia's State Duma passed controversial legislation to raise the retirement age in a first reading on Thursday, amid protests outside of the parliament building.

The government [announced](#) legislation on June 14, the eve of the World Cup, to progressively raise the population's retirement age over the next decade and a half, starting in 2019. Despite widespread opposition according to opinion polls, Russian authorities argue that the pension reform is necessary to ease pressure on the budget, which has been hit by weak economic growth and an aging population.

The bill passed the first of three readings in the State Duma on Thursday with 328 lawmakers voting in favor of the reform and 104 voting against.

The controversial vote took place as several hundred activists gathered outside the State Duma to rally against raising the pension age. At least 14 activists were detained during

pension protests in St. Petersburg on Wednesday.

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Under the plan, the retirement age for men would increase from 60 to 65 years by 2028, and from 55 to 63 by 2034 for women. Opponents cite life expectancy figures in asserting that a significant part of the population, especially Russian men, will not survive to retirement.

“While we were marveling at the goals scored during the World Cup, the Medvedev government decided to score a goal against every one of us,” Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov said during the hearing of the legislation.

“Your children and grandchildren won’t forgive you for this,” he warned lawmakers ahead of the vote.

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