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World Cup Fans Granted Visa-Free Entry to Russia Under Newly Passed Bill

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

World Cup fans will be able to travel visa-free to Russia for the rest of 2018 under a bill passed by the State Duma on Thursday.

Russia allowed football fans to enter the country without visas during the tournament this summer with Fan IDs that were issued to match ticket holders. On the closing day of the World Cup, President Vladimir Putin promised to extend visa-free travel for Fan ID holders.

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"Fan ID holders will be able to return to Russia without visas until the end of the year," the Duma said in a statement on Thursday after passing the bill in its third reading.

Before becoming law, the legislation must be passed by the upper-house Federation Council,

which sits down for its last session of the summer this Saturday, and signed by the president.

The visa waiver system will not extend to family members of Fan ID holders, as some lawmakers initially suggested, Mikhail Degtyaryov, the chairman of the Duma's Physical Fitness and Sport Committee, told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

"Relatives who don't have Fan IDs can't be included because this is a temporary rule for fans," Degtyaryov told RIA Novosti.

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