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U.S. MMA Fighter Jeff Monson Elected to Local Council in Russia

By Reuters

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

U.S. mixed martial arts fighter Jeffrey Monson, granted Russian citizenship by President Vladimir Putin in May, was elected on Sunday to the council of deputies of a small city just outside Moscow, official election results showed on Monday.

Monson, 47, a tattooed cage fighter known as The Snowman, registered in June to run for a seat on the council of Krasnogorsk, northwest of Moscow, where election documents say he now works as a coach in a sports club.

On the website of Moscow region's election commission, Monson is listed as fourth on the ruling United Russia party's list of candidates for the Krasnogorsk city council.

United Russia won 47.9 percent of this vote, automatically securing a seat for the MMA fighter, who was born in the U.S. state of Minnesota.

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Writing on social media, Monson, who has previously cultivated ties to the Russian Communist Party, said he ran as an independent.

"I was invited by United Russia party to run but I am independent. Unfortunately I learned there are no communists in the Communist party in Russia," Monson said on Monday.

Monson, a vocal critic of U.S. foreign policy, said in January 2016 he was applying for Russian citizenship because he had felt a solidarity with the Russian people since he first visited their country in 2011.

"I have big plans for work with children, am preparing various projects, including projects focused on promoting healthy lifestyles," Monson was cited as saying on election day by the local division of the United Russia party.

"Everything I do in Krasnogorsk — it's because I love Russia," Monson was cited as saying.

Videos shared on Monson's official Instagram page showed the sportsman in a Russia hockey team sweater, casting a ballot at a Krasnogorsk polling station with the help of a translator.

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