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Activists Deliver 1M Signatures to the Kremlin Against Retirement Age Hike

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Roman Pimenov / Interpress / TASS

A social conservative activist group said it has submitted more than a million signatures to the Russian presidential administration opposing government plans to raise the retirement age.

Polls say that pension reform legislation introduced this summer, which will gradually increase the pension age by five years starting next year, is opposed by 90 percent of Russians. State Duma deputies are scheduled to debate the bill in the second of three readings on Wednesday after the initial draft received almost 300 amendment recommendations.

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Videos shared by the pro-Kremlin Sut Vremeni (Essence of Time) movement showed activists lining outside the presidential executive office in central Moscow carrying stacks of paper.

An estimated 100 activists entered "the waiting room one by one to hand over boxes with signatures," the movement said Tuesday. Signatures were collected in 60 of 85 Russian regions, it noted.

"The signatories called on the president to categorically reject the pension reform, dismiss the government" and pursue a socially conservative domestic policy.

Other groups, including the Communist Party, have applied to hold a national referendum on the retirement age, but reportedly failed in organizing the vote.

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