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Russia Criminalizes Firing 'Pre-Retirement Age' Workers

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

Russian lawmakers have made it a criminal offense to fire workers in the five years before their retirement as the government seeks to mitigate anger over plans to raise the pension age.

Government plans to raise the current retirement age by five years have sparked nationwide protests and put a dent in President Vladimir Putin's approval rating. Putin promised last month to soften the unpopular reform, offering to cut the proposed retirement age for women from the initially proposed 63 to 60.

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A new State Duma bill imposes a fine of up to 200,000 rubles ($3,000) for firing or not hiring

so-called “pre-retirement age” workers.

The Duma voted 377-1 for the bill with one abstention in its third and last reading on Tuesday.

The bill has to be passed by the upper-house Federation Council and signed by Putin, who submitted the bill on Sept. 6, before it becomes law.

The pre-retirement age is defined as the 5-year period before the official retirement age.

Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said he hoped the new measure would “psychologically influence” employers against dismissing or not hiring workers on the cusp of retirement.

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