

Russian Duma Passes Retirement Age Hike Law

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Anton Novoderzhkin / TASS

Russian lawmakers have approved a divisive bill to raise the retirement age despite nationwide protests and falling approval ratings for the ruling party and President Vladimir Putin.

The government, seeking to relieve pressure on the state budget, proposed raising the retirement age for men from 60 to 65 and for women from 55 to 63 in June. Putin lowered the proposed hike for women from 63 to 60 and offered other concessions in a rare televised address last month following nationwide protests.

Related article: [Russians Are Much Less Willing to Protest Retirement Age Hike, Poll Says](#)

The State Duma voted 332-83 in favor of the bill on Thursday to begin gradually raising the pension age starting next year.

The vote took place 24 hours after lawmakers adopted Putin's proposed amendments and [approved](#) the watered-down pension reform bill in its second reading.

Both anti-Kremlin activists and Communist lawmakers who rarely oppose government initiatives spoke out against the proposed pension age increase in a country where average life expectancy for men is 66 and 77 for women.

The Duma bill must undergo an upper-house Federation Council approval before being signed into law by Putin.

The pension reform is also believed to have affected the latest local elections in which pro-Kremlin gubernatorial candidates suffered defeats in three Russian regions this month.

Putin replaced three governors on Wednesday, including in Primorye region where election officials declared the second round of voting invalid due to violations. A third round is expected in three months.

Following the rare electoral defeats, the Vedomosti business daily [reported](#) that up to 10 more governors could be on the chopping block this year.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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