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Russians Are Much Less Willing to Protest Retirement Age Hike, Poll Says

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Anton Novoderzhkin / TASS

Fewer Russians are willing to take to the streets against government plans to raise the retirement age, according to an independent Levada Center poll.

A majority of Russian respondents said they were willing to join protests against the unpopular reform in August, before President Vladimir Putin introduced several concessions to quell public anger. State Duma lawmakers are expected to pass the watered-down bill that gradually raises the retirement age starting in 2019 later on Thursday.

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This month, Levada's results showed a significant drop in the respondents who said they were willing to join protests against the pension reform — from 53 percent last month to 35

percent.

Meanwhile, 86.5 percent of respondents said they had a "sharply" or "mostly" negative view of the retirement age hike.

"There is discontent, but there is also the sense that everything's already been done," the Vedomosti daily quoted Levada sociologist Denis Volkov as saying Thursday. "They've resigned themselves to it but didn't accept it."

More than one-third of Levada's respondents viewed Putin negatively after his televised Aug. 29 address offering concessions, and 7 percent viewed him positively.

Around two out of five respondents said they believed Putin's proposed amendments to the draft bill did not change the pension reform in any way.

Volkov said the retirement age hike became "slightly more acceptable" after the president offered to lower the retirement age increase for women from 63 to 60 in his address.

Levada conducted the poll among 1,600 respondents in 52 Russian regions between Sept. 20 and Sept. 26.

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