The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Replaces St. Petersburg Governor Poltavchenko Amid Ruling Party's Election Setbacks

October 04, 2018

Georgy Poltavchenko / Kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin has replaced St. Petersburg Governor Georgy Poltavchenko amid simmering public anger against the ruling party a year ahead of regional elections.

Poltavchenko's resignation after seven years in office continues a week of reshuffles that has seen Putin oust several other regional heads up for re-election in 2019. A new pension age law the president signed on Wednesday has been met with protests and a drop in the ratings of the ruling party and the president.

Related article: Trust in the Russian President Drops to 5-Year Low — Poll

Putin named presidential envoy to the Northwest Federal District Alexander Beglov to take the

reins as acting governor of St. Petersburg on Wednesday, the Kremlin announced.

“Come September, we’ll see how this is working out and you’ll decide your own fate by then,” Putin told Beglov, who governed St. Petersburg for a few months in 2003.

Russia’s election chief said she expects St. Petersburg’s gubernatorial vote to take place as planned in September 2019.

Poltavchenko, 65, will now head the massive state-owned United Shipbuilding Corporation.

Ksenia Sobchak, the television star and journalist who was one of Putin’s challengers in the 2018 presidential election, is expected to run for St. Petersburg governor in 2019.

“I am the cause of Poltavchenko’s dismissal!” Sobchak declared on Facebook before the Kremlin made it official Wednesday.

Political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin linked Poltavchenko’s replacement to four election runoffs or losses suffered by four Kremlin-backed incumbents in the past month.

“Negativity is ripening, Poltavchenko has no taste, smell or color,” the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper quoted him as saying.

“It’s unacceptable for the head of the country’s second-largest city to lose. That’s why they chose to play it safe,” Oreshkin said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/10/04/putin-replaces-st-petersburg-governor-poltavchenko-amid-ruling-partys-election-setbacks-a63079