

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

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**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.

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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.

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