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Russian State Duma's Approval Rating Drops to 36% — Poll

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Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Public approval for the State Duma, Russia's lower chamber of parliament, has continued to fall following its approval of unpopular legislation that increased the pension eligibility age, according to a recent survey published by a state-run pollster.

Russia's State Duma approved controversial legislation earlier this year to raise the retirement age by five years for men and women — a measure that was signed into law by Putin in October. More than three-quarters of the 450 seats in the legislative body are occupied by deputies from the ruling United Russia party — whose ratings have fallen to 10-year lows according to recent surveys.

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The Duma's approval rating dropped to 35.9 percent in October, down from 48.2 percent last year, according to new results published by the state-funded VTsIOM pollster Tuesday.

Support for the upper-house Federation Council has also dropped year-on-year from 55.5 percent to 41.5 percent.

"The biggest drop in approval over the past six months was in both chambers of the Federal Assembly. Obviously, this is a direct result of changes in the pension system," VTsIOM sociologist Mikhail Mamonov said.

The Russian military led in the approval rating for state institutions, with 85.5 percent of VTsIOM's respondents backing it, followed by 69.5 percent for the Russian Orthodox Church. Law enforcement agencies and the media followed with 55 percent approval.

Labor unions and the Russian opposition found themselves on the other end of the spectrum, with fewer than one-third of respondents saying they approve of their activities.

The survey was conducted among 1,600 Russians on Oct. 19.

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