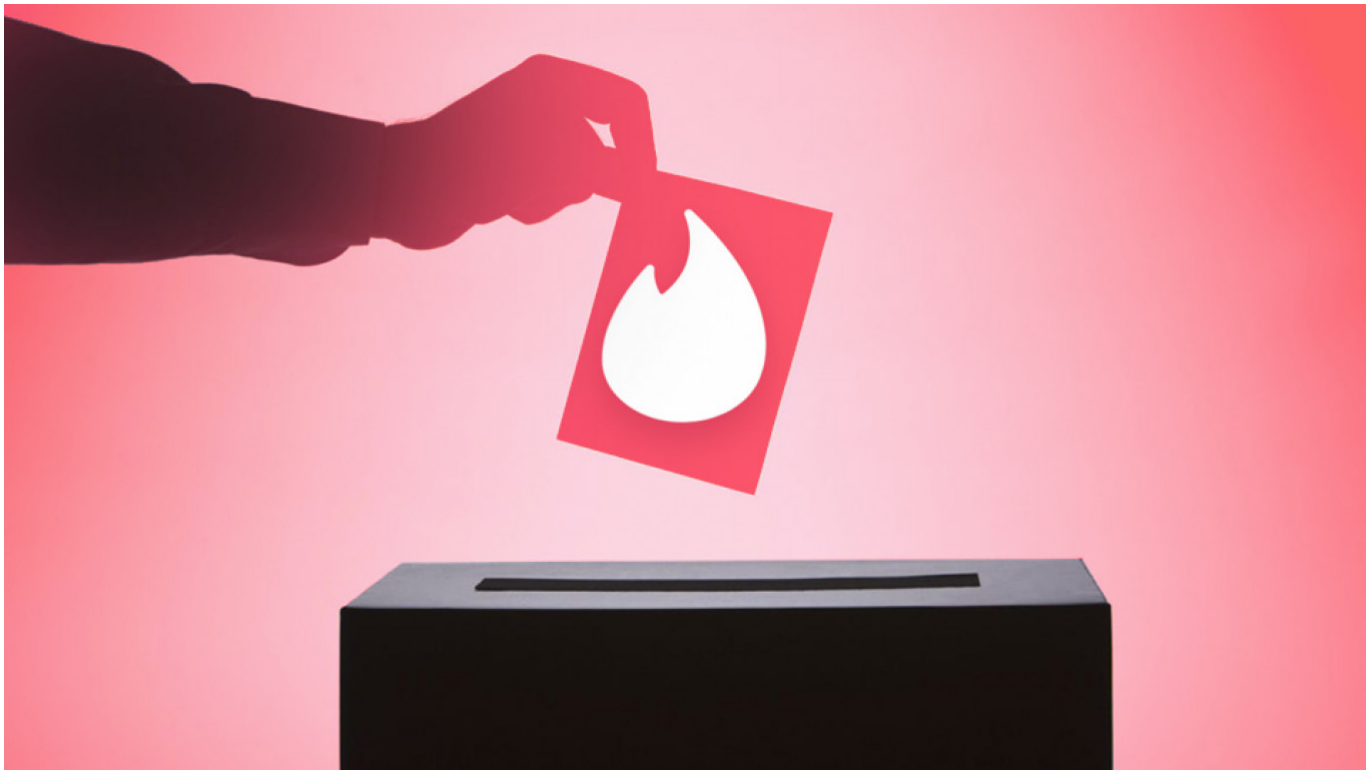
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Russian Politician Turns to Tinder in New Campaign Strategy

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In politics, the path to victory often lies through the heart.

A Russian politician in St. Petersburg has learned this lesson well — and is now seeking to get on the ballot in the upcoming local elections with the help of the popular dating app Tinder.

Leonid Nikolayev's profile reads "Your. Personal. Deputy," and he wants potential matches to ask him about why he's running for a seat in one of the city's municipal districts.

"I need hyper-local targeting and internet advertising," Nikolayev, 31, explained to the Znak.com news website when asked why he chose to use a dating app for his political campaign.

The Yabloko opposition party politician faces an uphill battle to get on the ballot in St. Petersburg, where local media reported that hundreds of opposition candidates have been denied registration on grounds of wrongly submitted paperwork.

St. Petersburg is one of more than a dozen Russian regions and cities where residents go to the polls to elect local representatives in September.

Using Tinder for politics previously landed supporters of U.S. Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders in trouble during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Related article: Opposition Barred From St. Petersburg Election Ahead of Vote

Two women's accounts were blocked at the time after they were reported too many times for peppering men on the site with messages promoting Sanders' candidacy.

"We wholeheartedly support people sharing their political views on Tinder, but we don't allow spamming. So feel free to spread the Bern, just don't spam," Tinder's spokeswoman said at the time.

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