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Russia's Regional Governments Back Changes Allowing Putin to Extend His Rule

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Putin voiced his support for the amendments at the State Duma. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

All of Russia's 85 regional parliaments have voted in favor of a package of constitutional amendments that would allow Vladimir Putin to remain president until 2036, the state-run RIA news agency cited senior Russian lawmaker Andrei Klishas as saying Friday.

The development comes days after Putin appeared at the State Duma to voice his support for an amendment that would allow him to reset his terms and seek the presidency two more times. The move came as part of sweeping constitutional changes that Putin first announced in January and many saw as a ploy by the Russian leader to retain power beyond the end of his term limit in 2024.

Both houses of Russia's national parliament have since backed the new amendment and a majority of regional parliaments endorsed it Thursday, sufficient for it to move to the next stage of the approval process.

But Klishas was cited as saying that every single one of Russia's 85 regional parliaments had now said yes.

"The Federation Council [upper house of parliament] has received the results of voting in all 85 regional parliaments," said Klishas. "They are all positive," RIA cited him as saying.

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The list of 85 regions he referenced includes two that are part of Russian-controlled Crimea, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

The amendments will now be sent to Putin’s desk, where he is expected to sign them on March 18, the anniversary of the annexation.

Russia's Constitutional Court must now examine the constitutional changes, which are due to be put to a nationwide vote in April.

The drafted amendments also contain pledges to adjust pensions to inflation and guarantee a minimum wage, as well as enshrine faith in God and define marriage as a heterosexual union.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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