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Russia Moves to Formally Allow Putin to Stay in Power

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Putin himself said he has not yet decided whether he would run for president again in 2024. **Kremlin.ru**

Russian lawmakers took first steps Wednesday to formally allow President Vladimir Putin to stay in power until 2036.

Current law limits the Russian presidency to two consecutive terms, requiring Putin, 68, to step down in 2024. But a clause within a set of constitutional reforms approved in a nationwide vote this summer allows Putin to ignore current limits and run for two more six-year terms.

Related article: Putin Grants Lifetime Immunity to Ex-Presidents and Their Families

A bill submitted to Russian parliament last month officially resets the number of terms served by current and former presidents.

Members of the lower-house State Duma voted Wednesday in favor of the bill in its first of

three readings. The draft law will then need backing from senators and a signature from Putin in order to become law, a step considered a formality for the Kremlin-backed legislature.

The presidential term limits bill is part of scores of legal acts pushed through parliament at breakneck pace to bring Russian law in line with the constitutional reforms, which came into force in July.

With lingering questions over his future, Putin signed laws this week that grant lifetime immunity to ex-presidents and allow them to become senators for life, a post that also grants immunity from criminal prosecution.

Putin himself said he has not yet decided whether he would run again in 2024.

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