The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Lawmakers Approve Bill Raising Maximum Draft Age

July 25, 2023



Sending conscripts for military service. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russian lawmakers on Tuesday passed a bill raising the upper age limit for military conscription and banning draftees from leaving the country, as Moscow continues its efforts to widen the pool of potential recruits for its war in Ukraine.

Under current Russian law, all men aged 18-27 are required to complete a one-year term of compulsory military service, a requirement that has been in place since before the invasion of Ukraine.

Amendments published on the day of the bill's third and final reading would raise the age limits for this compulsory military service to 18-30 starting in January 2024.

The changes do away with the original amendments — which had been endorsed by President Vladimir Putin in December — that sought to gradually raise the lower and upper age limits over a period of three years for compulsory military service to 21-30.

“The wording of the draft law has changed due to the serious demographic situation that affects the volume of [Russia’s] mobilization resource,” Andrei Kartapolov, the bill’s co-author, told Interfax.

Related article: Russia Raises Upper-Age Limit for Military Reservists

“[The new amendments] are necessary in order for us not to fall behind [in conscripting enough soldiers],” added Kartapolov, who chairs the Duma’s Defense Committee.

The lawmaker explained that the “limits are expanding” in order to ensure the recruitment of approximately 147,000 conscripts, which is the number of soldiers enlisted during Russia’s spring conscription campaign this year.

Additionally, the bill prohibits conscripted men from leaving Russia after receiving their draft notices, a measure to crack down on draft dodging.

Other changes to the bill announced last week maintained the lower age limit for conscription at 18, whereas earlier proposals sought to raise it to 21.

The Duma passed the conscription age bill Tuesday despite criticism from upper-house Federation Council senators Valery Bondarev and Andrei Klishas, who called on lawmakers to continue pursuing the originally proposed age range of 21-30 for mandatory military service.

Yet Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matvienko vowed Tuesday that her chamber would approve the State Duma’s bill with the updated conscription age range.

A vote by Russia’s upper-house Federation Council — which is scheduled for Friday — and Putin’s signature are required for the new limits to become law.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/07/25/russian-lawmakers-approve-bill-raising-maximum-draft-age-a81953