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Fourth Russian Region Outlaws 'Coercion' Into Abortion

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Nataliya Vaitkevich / pexels

Lawmakers in western Russia's Kursk region passed a law Friday banning the act of "coercing women" into undergoing an abortion amid increasing concerns about a looming nationwide ban.

"Let today's bill be the first step [toward a comprehensive solution to Russia's demographic problem]," the Kursk region's parliament wrote on the messaging app Telegram.

The new law bans the "promotion of abortion and childfree lifestyles," including "aggressive information on social media," regional Health Minister Yekaterina Pismennaya said.

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Individuals found guilty of "coercing" women into committing an abortion face fines ranging from 3,000-5,000 rubles ($32-$54).

Officials and entities convicted of the same crime face fines of 10,000-20,000 rubles ($110-220) and 30,000-50,000 rubles ($330-550), respectively.

Doctors who inform a woman about medical conditions that would require an abortion will not be held accountable under the law.

The abortion “coercion” bill was backed unanimously in the Kursk regional assembly.

Kursk is now among several other Russian regions, as well as annexed Crimea, where private clinics stopped providing abortion services in what authorities call a “voluntary” move.

Fears about the future of reproductive rights in Russia have grown as officials weigh measures that would raise birth rates to address the country’s ongoing demographic crisis.

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