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Ultraconservative Vitaly Milonov Wants Your Kids to Jam Out to Whitney Houston

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High school students celebrate their graduation on Red Square. **Yaroslav Chingaev / Moskva News Agency**

State Duma member Vitaly Milonov, notorious for his conservative and anti-Western views, as well as being among the lawmakers behind Russia's so-called "gay propaganda law," has come out in defense of high school students who want to play foreign music at graduation events.

Milonov, a senior member of the ruling United Russia party, accused school administrators in some regions of misinterpreting a new law requiring businesses to use only Russian on public signs and labels. The legislation, which came into force in March, has been framed as a safeguard against foreign influences.

Russian media reported this week that high schools in the Rostov, Yaroslavl and Tambov regions cited the law when banning music by artists like Sting, Toni Braxton and Whitney

Houston from being played at upcoming graduation events.

In the Ryazan region, education officials reportedly defended the move, arguing that administrators have the right to set musical guidelines based on so-called "traditional values."

"To my surprise, I heard that foreign music is being banned at graduation ceremonies in some regions," Milonov said in a video he posted on Telegram late Tuesday. "Why are they interpreting a law intended to protect the standards of the Russian language in such a monstrous way?"

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Milonov said he and other United Russia lawmakers plan to amend the legislation outlining the use of the Russian language in public "so that no one is tempted to do this again."

The lawmaker's defense of foreign pop culture comes just weeks after a bizarre incident at a Russian music awards ceremony, where he was heckled with a homophobic slur while presenting an award.

Milonov later dismissed the heckler's motives, suggesting the outburst was actually fueled by "ingrained antisemitism" sparked by the lyrics of the song for which he was presenting the award.

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