

Innovating by Registering Bikes and Shoes

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President Vladimir Putin recently promised to create 25 million new jobs by 2020. His loyal subordinates have proposed initiatives designed to make his promise a reality.

First came a proposal by Senator Tatyana Zabolotnaya from the Primorye region that would make it compulsory to register the nearly 5 million bicycles in the country. With 250 workdays per year, that averages out to registering 20,000 bicycles per day.

Let's suppose that 10 people would work in each new bicycle registration office — clerks, accountants, janitors and, of course, lots of security guards — and that they would register 10 bicycles per day, one every half hour plus 45 minutes for lunch. Right there you've got 20,000 new jobs staffed by loyal Putin and United Russia supporters who know that if the president leaves office, their cushy jobs will go with him.

The next proposal came from Maxim Ksendzov, deputy director of the Federal Mass Media Inspection Service. He proposed banning the use of public Wi-Fi networks for people under 18. Considering that Wi-Fi will soon even be installed in the Moscow metro, enforcing this rule

would require the creation of a special agency and the efforts of workers who would patrol stores and shopping malls, handing out fines to juveniles using Wi-Fi. Such an agency would be enormous, swelling the ranks of Putin's already bloated bureaucracy by at least 100,000 jobs.

Vitaly Milonov, a deputy in the St. Petersburg legislature from United Russia who introduced an anti-gay law in that city, came up with an even better initiative. He suggests testing all of the country's teachers to find possible pedophiles among them. This is no small task considering that there are 1,360,000 teachers in this country.

Testing for pedophilic tendencies is a serious matter — far more serious than registering bicycles. Each testing office would require psychologists, sex therapists, accountants, secretaries and, of course, lots of security guards. Since each psychologist would test no more than a handful of teachers per day, it comes out to nearly 1 million people working around the clock to save Russian children from predatory, pedophilia-inclined teachers.

In addition, there are 341,000 college professors. And what about instructors at vocational institutes, as well as kindergarten and nursery school teachers? What's more, children are also at risk from school security guards. Then there is the latent threat from orphanage staff, nannies, and a child's own parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents.

Simply put, every person in Russia must be tested for pedophilia, including the psychologists doing the testing. Otherwise, just imagine what would happen: A pedophile might get onto the testing board and approve pedophilic teachers.

While they're at it, why not register other forms of transportation besides bicycles — even shoes? That should create another 5 million jobs. Authorities could issue serial numbers for shoes and subject them to technical inspections like electronic goods. After all, every winter countless Russian women face great danger when they step outdoors onto icy sidewalks wearing high heels.

That's good for another 25 million high-tech jobs with each worker receiving a government-issued computer and Internet connection. This would make Skolkovo look like the minor leagues in terms of boosting innovation. And most important, all of those workers would vote for Putin because they know that any other leader would drop them from the government payroll the moment he assumes office.

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