

Vote to Oust Belykh Nixed by United Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Kirov region legislature canceled a no-confidence vote against liberal Governor Nikita Belykh after senior officials from the ruling United Russia party said they did not support it.

The initiative was proposed Monday by United Russia regional Deputy Valery Krepostnov and 18 other deputies, who signed a document calling for a meeting on Feb. 14 to hold the vote.

Alexei Ivonin, head of the regional legislature and a United Russia member, said in a statement Wednesday that he had to call off the meeting after senior United Russia functionaries called the initiative inappropriate and told him to wait for special orders from the party.

"My position about Belykh's activity is clear and was announced to the public and in my complaints to law enforcement authorities," Ivonin said. "But while discussing the issue with

United Russia, I was told that our decision was untimely."

Belykh, a former opposition leader appointed governor of the Kirov region in 2008, was questioned by investigators last week in relation to two criminal cases against anti-corruption lawyer Alexei Navalny, a friend and former adviser to the governor.

Investigators also raided Belykh's office and residence in connection with an alleged \$3 million theft of state property involving one of Belykh's subordinates.

Local and federal United Russia officials said Tuesday that the party was not behind the effort by regional lawmakers to oust Belykh.

Governors are frequently removed from their posts but almost always with an official order by the Kremlin, which maintains tight control of regional leaders.

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