

Duma to Vote on Governors Bill in 3rd Reading

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The  **Moscow Times**

The State Duma is expected Friday to vote on a bill that would allow regions to not hold direct gubernatorial elections.

The bill, which passed in a second reading earlier this week, would allow political parties represented in regional legislatures to each present up to three gubernatorial candidates to the president after consulting with smaller parties without elected regional deputies.

The president would then choose three final candidates whose eligibility would be voted on by the regional legislature, according to the bill.

Supporters of the bill say gubernatorial elections in Russia's most volatile republics provoke instability, while opponents see the bill as a way to allow the Kremlin to handpick loyal candidates and limiting citizens' democratic freedoms.

(MT)

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