

Most Russians Suspicious of Wealth, Survey Shows

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

Most Russians find it distasteful when lawmakers and officials are wealthy, a survey published Tuesday said.

According to a poll conducted by the Levada Center, 77 percent of Russians believe it's either "indecent" or "criminal" for government representatives to be flush with money, Kommersant reported.

An even greater proportion, 82 percent of the people polled, said it would be wise to introduce a requirement that would ban people from holding a government post if their wealth crosses a certain threshold.

About 13 percent of people polled said it was "normal" for the powers that be to have wealth.

Respondents expressed the opinion that both chambers of the parliament come out on top

in terms of the number of affluent members. The Cabinet and ministries came in a close second.

The Kremlin is seen as a more austere institution, ranking third.

Lev Gudkov, the polling center's director, said the survey shows the predominance of the opinion that large wealth is a result of some unfair or illegitimate dealings.

Gudkov said the responses reflect a recent urge to rid the government of people with business interests, which so far has affected primarily lawmakers.

In order to change these attitudes, the upper class has to demonstrate that it doesn't only amass fortunes, but also gives them away, said Yelena Shestopal, a political psychology expert at Moscow State University.

Open Government Minister Mikhail Abyzov, himself a former businessman, said entrepreneurs deserve respect because they "develop the economy and create jobs."

"Requiring a minimum amount of property or anything else would be a sign of a flawed society and an utterly unacceptable way to develop," he said.

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