

Deputy Calls for Ban on Blood Donations by Homosexuals

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A State Duma deputy has proposed banning gay and bisexual men from donating blood, saying that such a move would prevent the spread of HIV.

Mikhail Degtyaryov, a Moscow mayoral candidate for the LDPR party, said Monday that his proposal was not an act of discrimination but a precautionary measure since more than 65 percent of HIV-infected individuals are men, Interfax reported.

Valery Milonov, the United Russia deputy who co-authored the controversial legislation banning “gay propaganda” among minors, expressed his support for Degtyaryov's initiative.

“Of course, I support it. It will help our medicine. Look at them [gays], they all have AIDS,” Milonov said Monday.

Milonov also cited the fight against HIV and AIDS as the reason for such a move, saying that

“this is not discrimination. Even in America gays are forbidden from donating.”

Russia's attitude on gay rights has been under intense scrutiny since the anti-gay propaganda law was passed by the Duma in June.

The law has been dubbed "anti-gay" by critics and has led to calls by various rights groups to boycott the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014.

Russian officials have played down the idea that the legislation is homophobic, however, with Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko saying recently the law does not target homosexuals but seeks to protect minors from exposure to “non traditional” sexual relations because “their psyches are not yet fully formed.”

Degtyaryov toed the same line, adding that the Duma is also considering a program to provide anonymous and voluntary counseling for gay and bisexual people who want to become heterosexual.

"Many want to return to a normal life, to become heterosexual like 95 to 99 percent of our citizens," Degtyaryov said.

Any failure to forbid homosexuals from donating blood is a type of "sabotage," he said.

Nikolai Alexeyev, one of the most vocal LGBT activists in Russia, said it would be impossible to introduce a ban on homosexuals donating blood in Russia and that the talk of such a ban is just another PR stunt.

"There will be a lot of noise, and zero implementation of the law. Our politicians are so detached from reality that they no longer have any connection to the people. They just imagine gay people everywhere," Alexeyev told reporters.

Health Ministry spokesman Oleg Salagai said the ministry would carefully consider the initiative.

He said restrictions on gay blood donors already existed previously, but were canceled a few years ago, tvrain.ru reported.

Degtyaryov's proposal follows similar comments by talk show host Dmitry Kiselyov, who recently defended his earlier statement that gays should be banned from donating blood and sperm, and the hearts of homosexuals should be buried or burned as they are “unsuitable for extending the life of another.”

Kiselyov's comments prompted some bloggers and activists to call on the Investigative Committee and the General Prosecutor's Office to investigate him for extremism, according to Ekho Moskvyy.

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