

Duma Bill Could Ban Drug Users from Jobs

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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United Russia deputies have proposed restricting the rights of people who have taken drugs at least once, including limits on which jobs they can hold.

The State Duma's Anti-Corruption and Security Committee supported this proposal on Thursday and recommended other deputies adopt the measures in the first reading, Kommersant reported.

Under the proposal, people who have taken drugs would not be able to get driving or gun licenses, work as police officers or operate transport vehicles. Employers could also use the laws to justify firing a worker.

The changes would be made by modifying different laws related to professional occupations and, if accepted, could be implemented as early as 2014.

Some experts said that these measures are too harsh and should be applied only to people who have a clear drug addiction. They also reminded that a number of professions already have means to screen out drug addicts.

The high costs of the proposed changes were another concern. Russia has more than 2.5 million people who take drugs, according to the Duma committee's estimates.

United Russia calculated that the annual cost of doing the drug tests will be 1.9 billion rubles (\$60 million), considering that each test costs about 1,500 rubles (\$47). Estimates from other sources, however, were significantly higher and said the Defense Ministry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs alone are expected to have to spend more than 2.5 billion rubles to carry out the tests.

The proposal champions, including the head of the security committee Irina Yarovaya, said that they would want medical organizations to release information about drug test results to the Federal Drug Control Service, though other Duma deputies have said that this would be in violation of medical privacy laws.

On Thursday the Moscow police department said that it will test all of its officers for drug use, Kommersant reported. The tests will be carried out using funds from the department's budget.

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