

# Draft Bill Proposes Ban on Surrogate Children for Single Men

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February 04, 2014

**The  Moscow Times**

A working group has prepared a draft bill that would ban single men in Russia from becoming fathers by surrogate mothers, a news report said Tuesday.

Because gay marriage is illegal in Russia, the legislation, which is expected to be submitted to the State Duma for consideration in spring, would effectively prevent gay male couples from having children via surrogacy, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported.

Surrogacy is currently legal in Russia and is permitted not only for couples but for single parents, irrespective of their gender.

Surrogate mothers in Russia gave birth to about 1,000 children in 2013, Sergei Kalashnikov, the head of the Duma's Public Health Committee told Kommersant in November.

If the bill is approved by the Duma, heterosexual couples, regardless of whether or not they

are married, will be allowed to use surrogate mothers, as will single women.

The project's authors feel that it is fair to allow women who are unable to conceive naturally to seek the help of surrogate mothers, but feel that men may have "other motives" for doing the same thing.

It is "unacceptable" for a man to use a surrogate mother out of a desire to "satisfy their right to reproduction," instead of a wanting to "overcome infertility," the authors said.

The bill would also bring in socio-economic evaluations for the parents of prospective surrogate children, as is the case for adoptive parents in Russia, and a limit on the number of surrogate children a mother can have would also be introduced.

Yelena Mizulina, head of the Duma's Family, Women and Children Committee, in November proposed a total ban on surrogacy in Russia, claiming that it was "a most frightening phenomenon that threatens not only Russia but all of mankind with extinction."

Her main objections were that women could be forced into becoming surrogate mothers and that parents were not being secretive enough about their surrogate offspring's origins.

Kalashnikov said at the time that he was puzzled by Mizulina's comments and said that surrogate mothers could help millions of infertile parents in Russia.

Half of Russians feel that surrogacy is fulfills a useful role in society, while just more than a quarter said it was "morally unacceptable," a poll published in December by the public opinion center VTsIOM indicated.

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