



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 7, 2011

## New Russian Law Aimed at Decreasing Abortions

With a falling birth rate in a country having one of the world's highest abortion rates, concerned Russian lawmakers passed a bill on July 1 requiring that all abortion advertisements carry health warnings.

"Under the new law approved by the lower house of parliament [Duma, pictured left], 10 percent of the space used in abortion ads must carry a list of possible negative consequences for women, including infertility," reported Reuters News. Russia's upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, is expected to follow the Duma in approving the measure, and President Dmitry Medvedev will likely sign the legislation into law.



Reuters quoted one member of Russia's parliament, Viktor Zvagelsky, as saying that ads for abortion "make young girls believe they won't have any problems interrupting a pregnancy."

According to Russia's census, the country's population plummeted by more than 12 million between 1992 and 2008, and stands at around 143 million today. Legalized abortion has accounted for a significant part of that drop, with some 1.5 million abortions reported in the country in 2007 alone — nearly the same as the number of children born in that year. The United Nations has predicted that by 2050 the Russian population will have dipped to 116 million.

While the Soviet Union was the first country in the world to allow abortion on demand, beginning in 1920, dictator Josef Stalin banned the procedure in 1936 as the country's birth rate fell, a law that stayed in place until his death in 1954.

As reported by [LifeSiteNews.com](#), "The Duma is considering a number of proposals that would stop Russia's demographic death spiral, fueled by an abortion rate where 1,022 infants are aborted for every 1,000 who are born, according to some statistics." Among the legislative proposals aimed at lowering the number of abortions, reported the pro-life website, are "banning free abortions at government-run health clinics; requiring prescriptions for the 'morning-after' pill; requiring parental consent for teenagers and a husband's consent for married women; and mandating a one-week waiting period. Other proposals have included increasing the 2,000 ruble (\$70) monthly government subsidy offered to pregnant women."

Russia's Orthodox Church has been solidly behind the efforts to turn the tide on abortion, with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow "urging the Ministry of Health and Social Development to make 'preservation of pregnancy a priority task for the doctor' and discourage incentives for abortion," reported LifeSiteNews. "The Russian patriarch also advocated state support for pro-motherhood media campaigns, and suggested setting up crisis pregnancy centers in every maternity hospital to help 'lonely mothers in difficult life situations.'"



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Russia's runaway abortion numbers have helped to spawn a pro-life movement that has modeled itself, in part, on pro-life strategies in the United States. In early June the [New York Times](#) reported that Russian politicians had introduced "amendments to a draft law in the State Duma that would place some restrictions on abortion." Additionally, with encouragement from the Orthodox Church, "demonstrators marked International Children's Day by distributing leaflets on the dangers of abortion and releasing hundreds of balloons over Ulyanovsk, Lenin's birthplace, to support 'Russia without abortions.'"

One Duma member, Valery Draganov, was quoted by the *Times* as saying that the "number of abortions in our country reaches six to eight million a year." Draganov, who the *Times* said has been among Duma members proposing tighter restrictions on abortion, noted, "Every minute, two abortions are carried out in Russia. Due to botched abortions, 20 percent of families lose the ability to become parents. One in every five pregnant women who dies, dies as a result of abortion. These are catastrophic statistics."

Surprisingly, one of Russia's most visible (albeit subtle) pro-life leaders, according to the *Times*, is Svetlana Medvedeva, wife of Russia's president Dmitry Medvedev. The *Times* reported that at a "Sanctity of Motherhood" forum last year Mrs. Medvedeva spoke about the "rights of a child to life," and about the "general lack of support that she said usually drove women to 'artificial termination of pregnancy' ...." While the *Times* noted the first lady "carefully sidestepping the word abortion or saying outright that she opposes it," the paper reported that she nonetheless declared that the "state must help women keep their babies."

With the encouragement and support of the Orthodox Church, the pro-life movement, while still in its infancy, has gained considerable traction across Russia. Significantly, the *Times* noted, the movement has borrowed some of the successful strategies used by pro-life groups in America. "Graphic Web sites, posters and leaflets are supplemented with sweeping references to Russian history," the *Times* reported.

The paper also quoted Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the patriarchate's department on church and society relations, as saying that attitudes in Russia are changing. "... I think that we have all we need so as to change radically society's attitude toward abortion," he said, "so that abortion would become absolutely morally inadmissible and this would be reflected in politics and law."

It seems difficult to fathom that such a positive trend for a country wishing to distance itself from its past death ethic could be skewed in a negative light. Nonetheless, that is precisely what one student writer at Harvard University managed to accomplish in a recent [Crimson](#) editorial that doubled as an epistle on the need for cheap, easily accessible birth control. "While few would contest that Russian women receive abortions at alarmingly high rates," wrote Harvard sophomore Marina N. Bolotnikova, "impeding a woman's right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy is a senseless solution."

So how does Ms. Bolotnikova propose to merely reduce — but not eliminate — "the incidence of abortion in a nation whose women, for better or for worse, wish to limit their number of pregnancies?" Of course, it all begins "with affordable and widely accessible birth control," Ms. Bolotnikova counsels — which, as Planned Parenthood proponents have assured Americans for decades, will ultimately make abortion a rare occurrence.

However, nearly 40 years and 50 million aborted babies later, instead of a rarity, abortion has become a massive and profitable business which corporations such as Planned Parenthood are unwilling to give up without a monstrous fight against states committed to defending their unborn citizens.



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Pro-lifers hope that Russia's young pro-life movement will continue to demonstrate a fervent commitment to the unborn as Planned Parenthood-types in their own country fight to continue their murderous enterprise.



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