

Russia

Targeted Advocacy Blocks Tobacco Industry Lobbyist's Nomination to Duma

The Issue

In early 2010, tobacco control advocates from the Consumer Rights Federation (KONFOP) learned that Russia's ruling party, United Russia, planned to nominate a well-known tobacco industry lobbyist, Nadezhda Shkolkina, to the Russian State Duma.

Shkolkina is the executive director of the Tobacco Industry Development Council, a lobbying group supported by transnational tobacco companies Japan Tobacco International and British American Tobacco. According to the Guidelines of Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which Russia ratified in 2008, there is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests.

Shkolkina's potential appointment to the Duma would have violated the FCTC and furthered the tobacco industry's direct influence over tobacco control legislation in Russia.

Partners

Russian advocates led by KONFOP and members of the Anti-Tobacco Coalition "ATAKa" worked closely to develop an aggressive public campaign against Shkolkina's nomination.

Tobacco control advocates also worked with leading politicians, including officials in the Ministry of Health, the country's chief medical officer, Gennady Onishchenko, and vocal tobacco control supporters in the Duma such as Sergey Markov and Maxim Myshchenko.

Strategies

- Key government allies along with advocates actively lobbied Russian officials using informational packets outlining Shkolkina's activities.
- Partners conducted a letter writing campaign to over 70 United Russia members and government officials
- ATAKa placed an open letter addressed to the United Russia Leadership in two significant newspapers, the *Chastniy Korrespondent* (national coverage) and *Ryazan* (local paper in the district that Shkolkina would have represented).
- Activists organized an anti- Shkolkina picket at the entrance to the Duma.
- Surgeon General Gennady Onishchenko spoke publicly against Shkolkina's nomination at a public roundtable sponsored by the daily business newspaper RBK.

Outcomes

As a result of the efforts by tobacco control advocates and their allies, United Russia dropped Shkolkina's nomination.

The official nomination of Nikolay Bulaev as a replacement candidate was announced in late March 2010, one month after the campaign against Shkolkina began. Additionally, the open letters placed by advocates generated significant media attention including broadcast, print and internet media.

Supporting Documents

- *Chastnyj Korrespondent (Russian)*: Open letter to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin calling on him as United Russia leader to reject Shkolkina's nomination (3/20/2010)

http://www.chaskor.ru/article/otkrytoe_pismo_vladimiru_putinu_ot_grazhdanskogo_obshchestva_rossii_15927

- *Komsomolskaja Pravda (Russian)*: Interview with Gennady Onishchenko, Surgeon General of Russia (3/16/2010)- Russian

<http://www.kp.ru/daily/24456/619275/>

- *Our Ryazan' (Russian)*: News item announcing Nikolay Bulaev's, nomination to the Duma, replacing Shkolkina.

<http://www.nasharyazan.ru/novost1475.html>

- Youtube Video of Protest outside the State Duma:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHDVXPckbNo>