

# [***Georgia's parliament speaker vows to override presidential veto on divisive foreign influence bill***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2N-XVK1-JC5B-G48W-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

May 20, 2024 Monday 10:26 AM GMT

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**Section:** DOMESTIC NEWS

**Length:** 472 words

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**Dateline:** TBILISI, Georgia

**Body**

TBILISI, Georgia — Georgia’s parliament speaker on Monday vowed to override the presidential veto on divisive legislation that sparked weeks of mass protests by critics who see it as [*a threat to democratic freedoms and the country’s aspirations to join the European Union*](https://apnews.com/article/georgia-protest-russian-law-media-83271a5a81a235fc8c9e8d3d2e1877ff).

The legislation, passed by the parliament earlier this month, requires media and nongovernmental organizations and other nonprofits to register as “pursuing the interests of a foreign power” if they receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad.

The opposition has denounced the bill as “the Russian law,” because Moscow uses similar legislation to crack down on independent news media, nonprofits and activists critical of the Kremlin. The government argues it is necessary to stem what it deems as harmful foreign influence over the country’s ***politics*** and to prevent unspecified foreign actors from trying to destabilize it.

[*Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili*](https://apnews.com/article/georgia-free-speech-foreign-influence-0af8b52fd8cc56149cbe8aa655626c01), who is increasingly at odds with the governing party, Georgian Dream, [*vetoed the legislation on Saturday*](https://apnews.com/article/georgia-media-law-0b626b2cfe22761c03e6cce1b2a59d1a), but the ruling party has a majority sufficient to override a presidential veto.

Shalva Papuashvili, parliament speaker and Georgian Dream member, told reporters on Monday that “of course, the parliament will override this veto.” He said the parliament will hold a session to do so next week.

The bill that sparked protests this year is nearly identical to one that [*Georgian Dream was pressured to withdraw last year*](https://apnews.com/article/georgia-foreign-agents-law-protests-parliament-1ab288cb3a3ccf330830ce7cae5603e2) after street protests. Renewed demonstrations have rocked Georgia for weeks, with demonstrators scuffling with police, who used [*tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds*](https://apnews.com/article/georgia-media-legislation-foreign-influence-protest-f42557d18f04af03cc68a372acd174f6).

The bill also drew criticism from European Union officials. In a joint statement Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed “deep regret” over "the decision of the Georgian government and ruling party to deviate from this path by acting against our common European values and the aspirations of the Georgian people, such as through the adoption of the so-called law ‘on transparency of foreign influence.’”

“Georgia’s European path has been chartered — but speed and direction of moving forward depend on Georgia,” the statement, posted on Facebook, read.

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze argued on Monday that more than 60% of the population supports the measure and that “the common sense of the majority of the population should prevail,” although he didn't specify where the number came from, nor did he offer any evidence to back up that claim.

He also accused Zourabichvili of “blocking all space for discussion.”

"Our proposal to international partners was to use the veto procedure to reconcile positions, but Salome Zourabichvili rudely vetoed the law, thereby, unfortunately, blocking all space for healthy discussion,” Kobakhidze said.

**Load-Date:** May 20, 2024

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