# Georgia's Parliament Overrides Veto to Pass 'Foreign Agents' Law Amid Protests



**Georgian Parliament Passes Controversial 'Foreign Agents' Law Amid Protests**

On Tuesday, Georgia's Parliament, dominated by the ruling Georgian Dream party, overrode a presidential veto to pass a controversial "foreign influence" law. The legislation mandates that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and media outlets receiving more than 20 percent of their funding from abroad register as "foreign agents" or face fines. Critics, including the opposition and Western officials, argue that the law mirrors Russian policies used to suppress civil society and media freedoms.

President Salome Zourabichvili vetoed the bill earlier in May, citing concerns that it contradicted Georgia's constitution and European democratic values. Despite her veto, the Georgian Dream party, led by billionaire oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, secured the majority needed to override it.

The bill has sparked significant unrest, with nightly protests in Tbilisi escalating into clashes with the police. Protesters, including many students and young people, have been met with tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets.

The legislation's passage marks a pivotal moment for Georgia, a former Soviet state with aspirations of European Union membership. EU officials, such as Josep Borrell, have warned that the law could jeopardize Georgia's EU bid. The U.S. has also announced sanctions against Georgian officials deemed complicit in undermining democracy.

The law, part of a broader package including restrictions on LGBTQ+ rights and increased government control over elections, has heightened concerns about Georgia's tilt towards Russian influence. The contentious bill is set to come into force next month, further intensifying the political crisis and public dissent in the country.