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STRENGTHENING
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IN LATIN AMERICA

NOVEMBER 2021

Argentina

Legislative elections post-electoral report



Executive summary

On November 14, Argentines voted to renew their Congress for the next two years (2021-2023). In both chambers of the Legislative branch, Frente de Todos (ruling party) remains the largest parliamentary group but now lacks the seats to push forward its agenda without opposition support. Thus, a new-look Congress more needy of dialogue with opposition groups is set to emerge, both in terms of approving and blocking proposals from either side.

As of December 10 (date on which the elected legislators will take office), the Chamber of Deputies will comprise 118 Frente de Todos, versus 116 for Juntos por el Cambio. The Chamber's remaining 23 deputies hail from minority blocs, among them Frente de Izquierda and Avanza Libertad with four seats each. Meanwhile, the Senate has seen the Peronists stripped of their qualified majority for the first time since 1983. Frente de Todos will still command most Senate seats, at 35, with Juntos por el Cambio now with 31 and the remaining six split among other spaces.

The elections, then, have badly bruised the ruling party, losing in all but eight provinces (Catamarca, Chaco, Formosa, La Rioja, Salta, San Juan, Tierra del Fuego and Tucumán.) An anomaly on the night was Santiago del Estero, a province that witnessed Frente Cívico por Santiago, allied to the ruling party, claim victory. Frente de Todos had deliberately stepped back from that race so as to prevent the opposition capitalising on the anti-government mood. Also important is that in the province of Buenos Aires (the one with most voters and a traditional stronghold of Frente de Todos) the ruling party lost, but not by the margin predicted after the primaries. Instead the winners, Juntos por el Cambio, witnessed their 5 point advantage over the Frente de Todos in the primaries become reduced to barely 1%.

In the short term, the ruling party will face two major challenges: first, to guarantee internal cohesion (to prevent its electoral defeat leading to it unravelling further) and second, to reach the necessary consensus with the opposition to move forward with its legislative agenda.

Juntos por el Cambio has been buoyed by the results, seeing them as a clear sign of rejection of the government. This climate appears to be ripe for it to make further gains and consolidate ahead of the 2023 presidential vote.

Basic questions

What was voted for?

On November 14, Argentines elected 127 deputies nationwide and 24 senators in 8 provinces (Catamarca, Chubut, Córdoba, Corrientes, La Pampa, Mendoza, Santa Fe and Tucumán). Those elected will be part of the new composition of the National Congress as of December 10.

How long is the term of office of the new legislators?

The new legislators will have different terms of office. On one hand, the elected deputies will have a term of office of 4 years, i.e. until December 9, 2025. On the other hand, elected senators will remain in office for 6 years, until December 9, 2027.

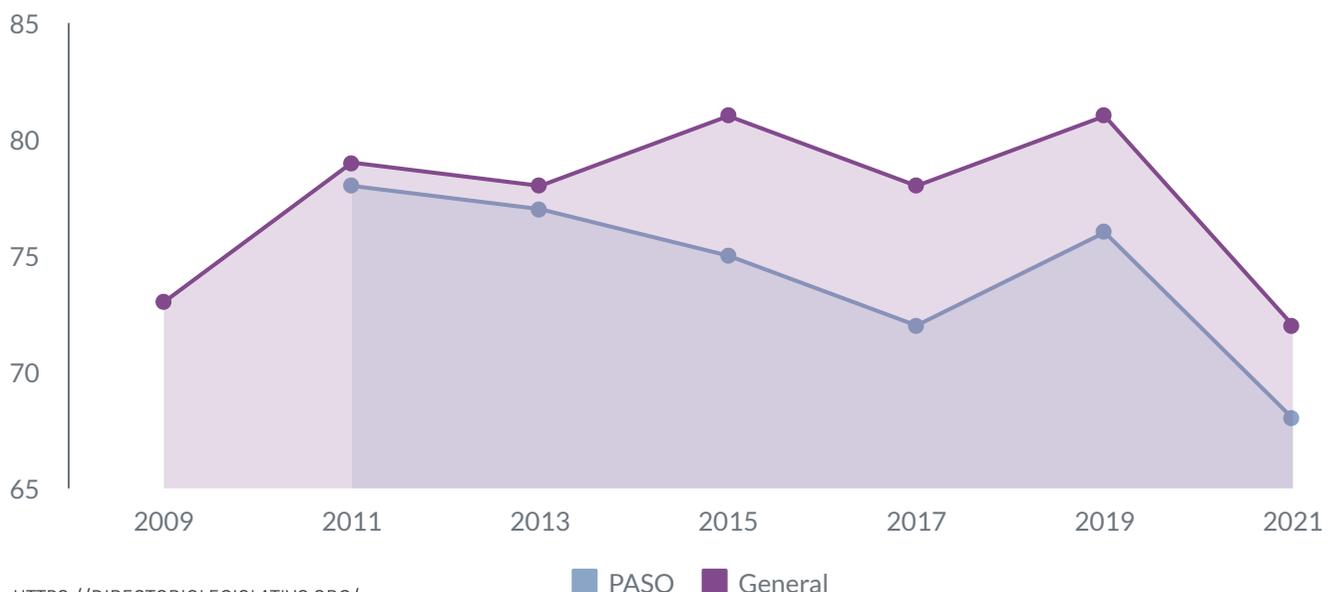
How many people voted?

According to the Ministry of the Interior, voter turnout was 71.6% of the electoral roll. Thus, it was the lowest turnout in a general election since the return of democracy in 1983. Until now, the legislative elections with the lowest voter turnout had taken place in 2009 (73.2%). The same trend was registered in the primary elections of September 12, when the turnout was 66.2% of the electoral roll, the lowest since the primaries have existed.

How were deputies and senators elected?

The Chamber of Deputies comprises 257 deputies directly elected by the population of the provinces and the City of Buenos Aires. The number of deputies per district is proportional to the number of inhabitants. This Chamber is renewed in halves every two years through a proportional representation approach, referred to as the D'Hondt system. Under this, seats are assigned to the candidate lists in proportion to the number of votes received.

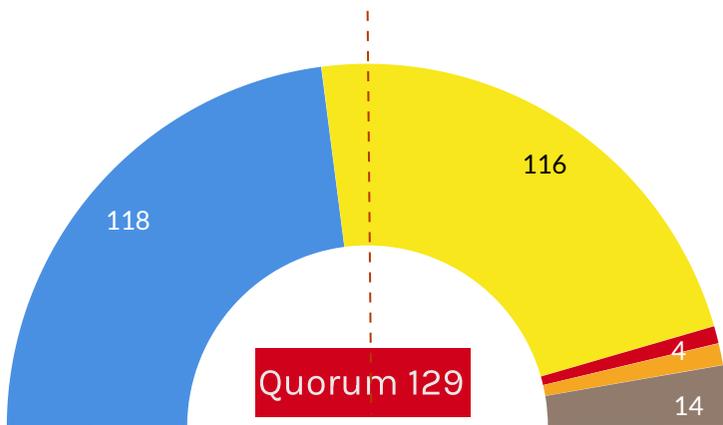
The Senate is composed of 72 senators, three for each province and three for the City of Buenos Aires. It is renewed by thirds every two years through a majority representation system. That is to say, the electoral list that obtains the most votes gets two seats, while the remaining one corresponds to the party that follows it in number of votes.



Congress 2021-2023

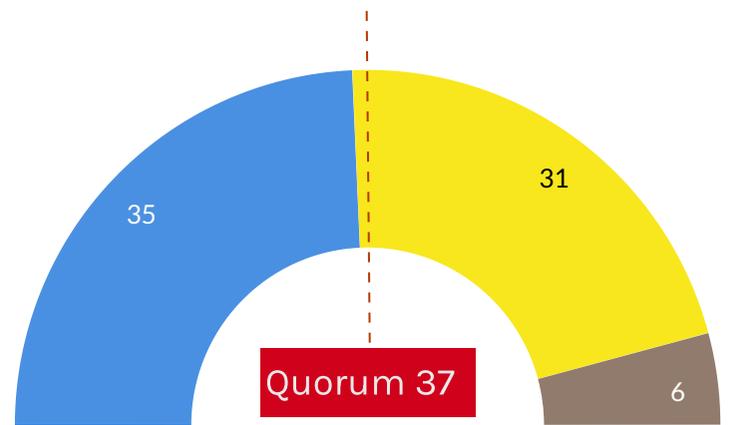
The November 14 elections saw half of Chamber of Deputies seats and a third of Senate positions up for grabs, and so an important shake-up will now come into effect after December 10. Indeed, the new legislative landscape will, to an important degree, change the dynamics among and between the ruling party, opposition and new and old allies of each. The Congress of the Nation will be made up as follows:

Deputies 2021-2023



■ Frente de Todos (45.91%) ■ Juntos por el Cambio (45.14%)
 ■ Izquierda (1.56%) ■ Avanza Libertad (1.95%)
 ■ Otros bloques (5.45%)

Senate 2021-2023



■ Frente de Todos (48.61%) ■ Juntos por el Cambio (43.06%)
 ■ Otros bloques (8.33%)

Chamber of Deputies

In the Chamber of Deputies, Frente de Todos will be the first minority with 118 seats, followed by Juntos por el Cambio with 116. Meanwhile, the Federal Interbloc (formed by Córdoba Federal, Consenso Federal y Socialista) will have 6 seats and the Federal Unity Interbloc (formed by Frente de la Concordia Misionero and Juntos Somos Río Negro) will have 4 seats. The Frente de Izquierda Unidad will have 4 deputies and the libertarians of La Libertad Avanza and Avanza Libertad will have 5. The remaining forces (Acción Federal, Partido Ser, Movimiento Popular Neuquino and Frente Amplio Progresista) will have 1 seat each.

Consequently, in order to achieve the quorum (129 deputies), the Frente de Todos will need the support of 11 non-official deputies. It is possible to expect that the government coalition will turn to its allies of Unidad Federal (4) and even obtain the support of Deputy Claudio Vidal of the Partido Ser. Meanwhile, the members of the Federal Interbloc and the provincial monoblocs will condition their behavior to the negotiations that the Government starts with their district leaders. Finally, it is unlikely that the Frente de Izquierda Unidad and the libertarians will add votes for the government.

Senate

In the Senate, Frente de Todos will also be the 'first minority' with 35 seats, followed by Juntos por el Cambio with 31. Meanwhile, Hacemos por Córdoba, Frente de la Concordia Misionero, Juntos Somos Río Negro, Movimiento Popular Neuquino, Justicialista 8 de Octubre and Mediar will have 1 seat each.

In this way, the ruling party will need its allies (Alberto Weretilneck of Juntos Somos Río Negro and Magdalena Solari Quintana of Frente de la Concordia Misionero) to reach the quorum (37 senators), without having to negotiate with Juntos por el Cambio. It should be noted that the senators of Movimiento Popular Neuquino, Justicialista 8 de Octubre and Mediar usually vote aligned with Juntos por el Cambio. Finally, Alejandra Vigo of Hacemos por Córdoba would form an opposition monobloc.

Relations between opposing forces

The mid-term elections have cemented Congress' division into two rivalling blocs: on one hand, Frente de Todos (ruling party) and on the other, Juntos por el Cambio. However, neither alone now possesses the numbers to push its agenda without some form of consensus or compromise. By the same token, neither of the two main parties will be able to unilaterally block the proposals of the other. Instead, the ruling party will have to negotiate to attract the backing it needs, something which may lead to delays in the legislative process.

Amid this, the role of the other smaller minority blocs gains importance. These parties (Hacemos por Córdoba, Consenso Federal, Frente de la Concordia Misionero, Movimiento Popular Neuquino, Juntos Somos Río Negro, among others) will have leverage to facilitate or obstruct the agendas of the Frente de Todos or Juntos por el Cambio. In this way, they will be able to negotiate their support in exchange for the approval of initiatives of their interest. Exerting that influence in circumstances where a single party or alliance holds a qualified majority in both chambers would be much harder.

Relations between opposing forces

In view of the results, it is expected that Juntos por el Cambio will seek to double down and even impose its own legislative agenda. In response, Frente de Todos will need to consolidate old and weave new alliances. The formula for avoiding paralysis in Congress this appears to 'unity + allies'.

Unity: The electoral defeat could generate changes within Frente de Todos. For some time now, the differences between the key figures of Kirchnerism and others, notably, Argentina's governors, has been growing. It is probable that legislators aligned with the provincial governors will increase the 'price' of their vote, demanding greater participation in decision making and in the allocation of key roles. The challenge for Máximo Kirchner, president of the bloc in the Chamber of Deputies, and José Mayans, president of the bloc in the Senate, will be to cater to demands of their alliance in such a way that unity is strengthened and no further legislative weight is lost.

Allies: The electoral defeat also affects the Government's negotiation capacity with the remaining blocks and with the provincial leaders, who on some occasions -even being in opposition- made their legislators available to pass important laws. Having started the race for the Presidential elections of 2023, the political leaders will evaluate their movements in electoral terms and none of them wants to be on the side of the losers.

Relations between opposing forces

An additional difficulty is the emergence and growth of political blocs located at the extremes of the ideological spectrum, as they reduce the expectations of the ruling party to gain allies.

The 2021-2023 Congress will have the presence of new actors: the libertarians of Avanza Libertad. Although it is not possible to anticipate what position they will adopt, they will hardly support the laws of the Frente de Todos. There are even some who speculate that, in the future, they could join the ranks of Juntos por el Cambio or promote libertarian projects with the support of the "hard wing" of the opposition coalition.

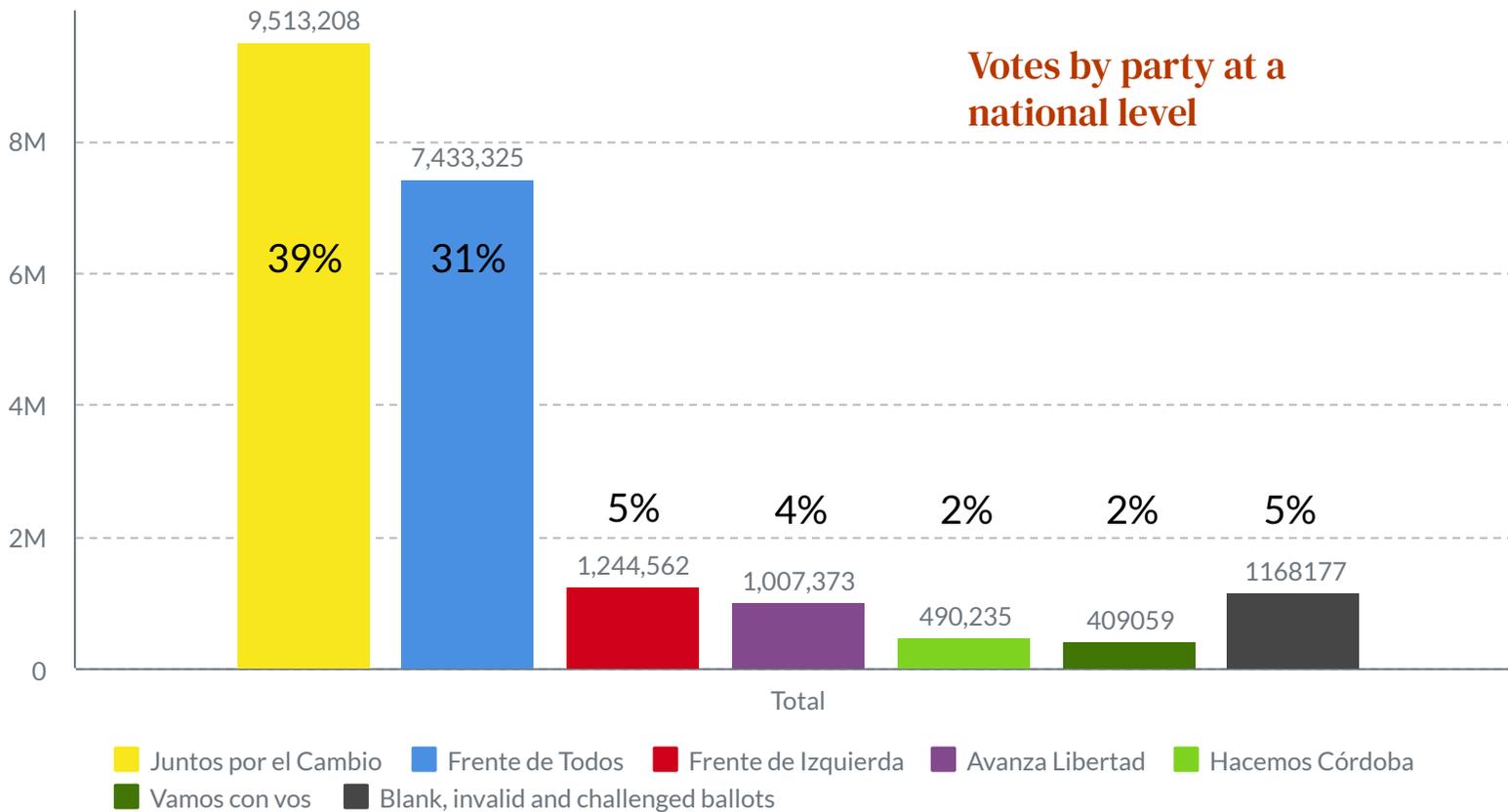
On the other hand, the Frente de Izquierda added 4 seats. Historically, the behavior of the left-wing deputies is in line with the party doctrine, therefore, with few exceptions, they will not participate in the official "poroteo" (vote counting) either.

Thus, the Frente de Todos will have to negotiate vote by vote and law by law. But not just any law. Everything seems to indicate that its reform agenda (among them, the reform of the Federal Justice and the Public Prosecutor's Office) will have to be resigned, since it does not have enough political support to promote it. On the other hand, it may try to move forward with the treatment of bills with sufficient political consensus, which, in general, do not imply major changes to the status quo.

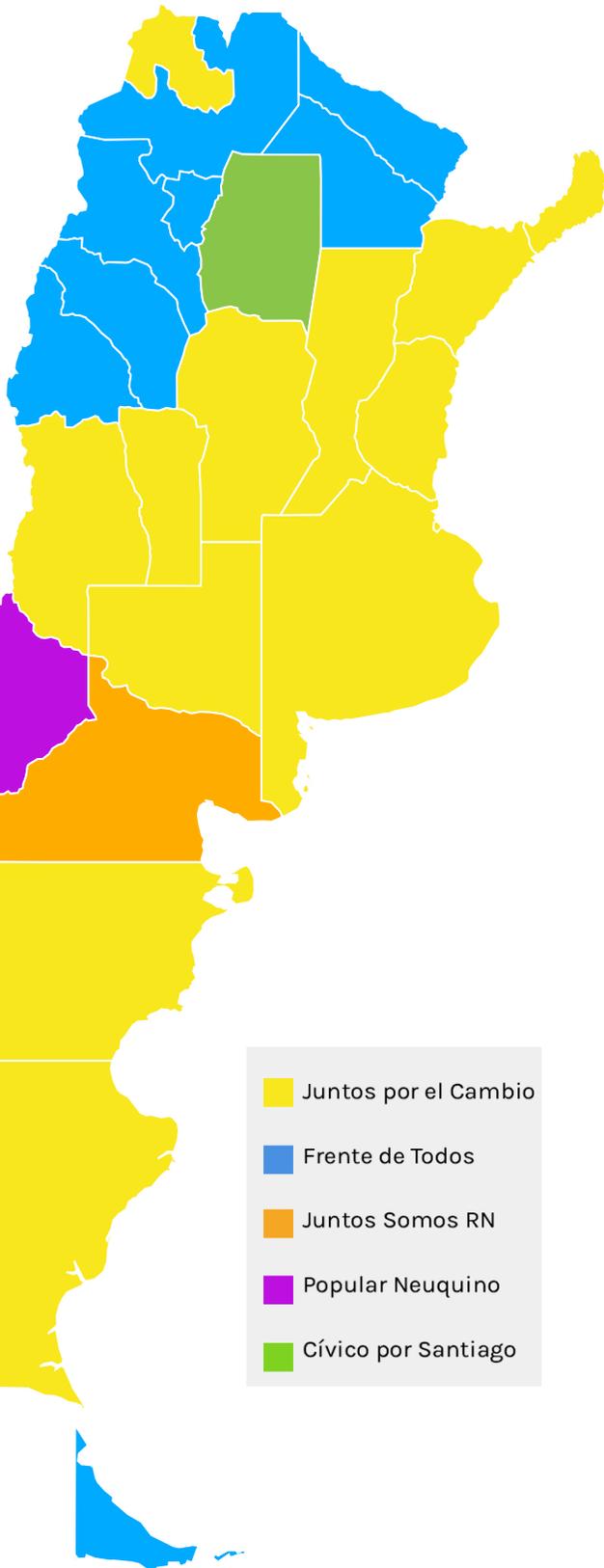


Key takeaways from the general election

At the national level, Juntos por el Cambio won with 39% of the votes, followed by Frente de Todos with 31%. Meanwhile, the Izquierda (Left) was ranked as the third force with 5%, followed by Avanza Libertad with 4% and Hacemos por Córdoba and Vamos con Vos with 2%. In addition, blank, invalid and contested votes totaled 5%.



Results by district according to political space



Juntos por el Cambio won in 13 provinces, including the five most populated districts of the country: Buenos Aires, City of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and Mendoza. It also won first place in historically Peronist provinces, such as Santa Cruz and La Pampa. These results allowed it to win 61 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (one more than it had at stake) and 14 seats in the Senate (6 more than it had at stake).

Meanwhile, Frente de Todos won in 8 districts (Formosa, La Rioja, Tucumán, Salta, Catamarca, San Juan, Chaco and Tierra del Fuego) and managed to improve its performance in some provinces, such as Buenos Aires and San Luis. Besides, it was able to reverse the result of the primaries in Chaco and Tierra del Fuego. In any case, it was left with 118 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (2 less than it had) and 35 in the Senate (6 less than it had).

Special mention must be made to Santiago del Estero, where the Frente Cívico por Santiago, a space allied to the ruling party, won. In this province the Frente de Todos did not compete with the same seal at provincial level. It was an electoral alliance to ensure that the reference to the governing party did not have a negative correlation at the polls.

As a way of summing up, Frente de Todos managed to retain the first minority in the Chamber of Deputies -although it was farther away from the quorum- and, for the first time since the recovery of democracy in 1983, Peronism will not have its own majority in the Senate.

Agenda of the 2021-2023 Congress

In the short term, it is expected that the legislators will deal with a set of pending bills, among which the Budget 2022 stands out. In addition, Congress is expected to make progress in the treatment of the "green agenda", made up of initiatives on integral management of containers, tire management and minimum environmental protection budgets.

Among the agenda items that Congress could deal with before the end of the year, the following are also noteworthy: the regulatory framework for medical cannabis and industrial hemp; the national program "Marcha al Campo", which seeks to promote the establishment of people on public lands for food production; the suspension of evictions of family farmers; and the creation of a Family Farming Fund and a Historical Reparation Fund for indigenous communities. In the health area, Congress would move forward with a bill to declare the integral response to HIV infection to be of public interest.

Furthermore, it is also expected that the new Congress will discuss issues that will need to be agreed internally within the Frente de Todos (due to the fact that there is no uniform consensus regarding their wording) and with the other benches, such as the bill for the promotion of the agro-industrial sector, the promotion of the automotive industry, hydrocarbon investments and sustainable mobility.

In turn, other initiatives may also integrate the short/medium term agenda. Among these bills that Congress could address in December, the renewal of the Solidarity Law stands out. This is a temporary law, which expires on December 31. This law incorporated, among other provisions, a tax on exports of physical products and digital services.

Finally, but no less relevant, the Executive Branch maintains that in the coming months it will reach an agreement to restructure Argentina's debt before the International Monetary Fund. This agreement will have to be ratified by the Congress, probably during the first semester of 2022. The particularity of this issue will be not only the difficulty to obtain the necessary endorsements from the opposition sectors, but also to reach an internal consensus on the agreement among the different representatives of the Frente de Todos.

Finally, after the election results were known, President Alberto Fernández announced the presentation of a bill that will explain the long-term economic program for sustainable development. It will be sent to Congress during the first week of December.

Main alliances

The [Law 23.298](#) of the Political Parties establishes that the groups must submit an electoral platform and send it to the court with electoral competence of their district before the elections. Meanwhile, [Law 26.571](#) of democratization of political representation determines that candidates must sign an affidavit that commits them to respect the platform presented by their list.

For the purposes of comparative analysis, the proposals presented by the party lists in Buenos Aires and the City of Buenos Aires were grouped by thematic categories:

ENVIRONMENT



Frente de Todos: Preserving the environment, biodiversity and sustainable development with emphasis on the development of science and technology.



Juntos por el Cambio: Nurture public space and sustainable mobility. Promote rational use of natural resources, renewable energies and clean technologies and industries. Develop a 'circular economy' based on recycling and efficient use of resources. Promote measures for the reconversion of packaging to sustainable ones and strengthen awareness campaigns for waste separation at source.



Prohibition of aerial spraying with toxic agro-chemicals, open-pit mega-mining and land clearing. Defense of wetlands and native forests. Protection of the marine environment against fishing plundering.



Preservation of the environment and natural resources. Promotion of the use of clean energies.



Protection of the environment and natural resources to prevent contemporary mismanagement from jeopardizing the economic viability and quality of life of future generations.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



Frente de Todos: Expanding the scope of social policies.



Juntos por el Cambio: Reinforce social assistance and the message that education is the only path to true human development. Promote documentation, health, inclusion, training, counseling and recreation services in vulnerable neighborhoods. Eliminate intermediaries between the State and the people.



Emergency family handout of \$40 thousand pesos for all needy families.



Address unemployment with a temporary subsidy (maximum of 2 years, on a declining scale).

EDUCATION



Frente de Todos: Deepening the quality of education.



Juntos por el Cambio: Incorporation of technologies and tools to modernize education; prioritizing strategic learning; generating new vacancies in the public system; ensuring the quality of public education through evaluations and measurements of students and teachers. Increase the School Food Service (Servicio Alimentario Escolar in Spanish) budget, diversify the menu and strengthen audits.



Defense of free public education. Free connectivity for all teachers and students. Elimination of subsidies to private education. Repeal of the Higher Education Law. Single, state, free and secular national education.



Declare education an essential public service. Eliminate or severely limit the right of teachers to strike. Experience-based learning and talent development. Promotion of research. Creation of a national evaluation system.

JUSTICE



Frente de Todos: Supporting the human rights policy initiated in 2003, developing policies against human trafficking, combating drug trafficking and border control, detecting and closing slave labor sites, and denouncing institutional violence and violations of rights by the State.



Juntos por el Cambio: Transparency in the operation of the courts by incorporating technological systems that enable access to information; guaranteeing the independence of powers and providing the necessary conditions for judicial officials to perform their work with complete freedom.



No to lowering the age of imputability. Popular election of prosecutors and judges with revocable mandates.



Reform of the Judicial Council. Elimination of per saltum. Implementation of trial by jury. Immediate deportation of foreign criminals. Application of life imprisonment. Partial privatization of the penitentiary system.

PRODUCTION AND LABOR



Frente de Todos: Aim at a society of full employment, through laws that invigorate the domestic market and the way of insertion in a competitive world. Expansion of the areas of research and technological innovation, improvement of strategic infrastructure and policies aimed at the development of SMEs and micro-enterprises. Exploit the potential of the agricultural sector without neglecting the strategic objective of diversifying the productive matrix and preserving the environment.



Juntos por el Cambio: Promote entrepreneurship, the development of creative industries and the incubation of young companies. Promote investment and exports of SMEs and MSMEs. Promote production, training and formalization of the popular economy. Deepen the articulation between the State and the private sector.

PRODUCTION AND LABOR



Minimum wage equal to the cost of the family basket indexed monthly according to the real increase in the cost of living. Prohibition of dismissals and suspensions. 82% mobile and increase of the minimum wage to cover the pensioners' food basket.



Freedom of contracting. Abolition of the minimum wage. Limit the right to strike to an exceptional minimum. Eliminate the regime of severance pay without just cause and replace it with unemployment insurance. Elimination of employer contributions. Pension reform. Declaration of bankruptcy of the state pay-as-you-go system and its replacement by a system of capitalization of contributions actually made.



Strengthening of the domestic market and promotion of foreign trade. Improving business competitiveness. Reduction of the tax burden to encourage productive investment.

SECURITY



Frente de Todos: Strengthening of democratic, comprehensive and effective citizen security policies that articulate a set of actions in different areas of public policy.



Juntos por el Cambio: Increase police presence and the number of personnel; build prevention policies with citizen participation. Hierarchization of the police force, improvement of salaries and respect for promotions, training of new police officers and ongoing training of in-service personnel.



Annulment of anti-terrorist laws. Dissolution of intelligence agencies.



Lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age; reducing the rights of prisoners (e.g. right to vote); modifying laws and procedures that interfere with police action and grant concessions to criminals.

Top elected legislators



Leandro Santoro

Deputy for Frente de Todos - City of Buenos Aires. Political scientist and teacher of radical origin. Since 2017 he has held a seat in the Legislature of Buenos Aires for the Frente de Todos block. Close to the President of the Nation, Alberto Fernández. Moderate and pro-dialogue.



Victoria Tolosa Paz

Deputy for Frente de Todos - Buenos Aires. Public Accountant. In 2020 she was appointed President of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies. Answers to the leadership of the President of the Nation, Alberto Fernández.



Anabel Fernández Sagasti

Senator for Frente de Todos - Mendoza.

Lawyer, public auctioneer and commercial broker. She has been a senator since 2015. She founded La C mpora in the province of Mendoza. Responds to the leadership of CFK.



Pablo Yedlin

Senator for Frente de Todos - Tucum n.

Physician. He has been a national deputy for Frente de Todos since 2017. He responds to the leadership of the governor of the province of Tucum n, Juan Luis Manzur.



Top elected legislators

María Eugenia Vidal

Deputy for Juntos por el Cambio - City of Buenos Aires
Political scientist. Former governor of the province of Buenos Aires. Referent of the PRO party with national projection.



Diego Santilli

Deputy for Juntos por el Cambio - Buenos Aires.
Public Accountant. Current Deputy Chief of Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Responds to Horacio Rodríguez Larreta's leadership.



Emilio Monzó

Deputy for Juntos por el Cambio - Buenos Aires.
Lawyer. With Peronist roots. Former President of the Chamber of Deputies.
Dialogist profile and consensus builder.



Rogelio Frigerio

Deputy for Juntos por el Cambio - Entre Ríos.
Economist. Former Minister of the Interior during the Cambiemos administration. Referent of the Integration and Development Movement. He has a strategic and consensus profile.



Top elected legislators

Juntos por el
CAMBIO



Ricardo López Murphy

Deputy for Juntos por el Cambio - City of Buenos Aires.
Economist. He was Minister of Economy, Defense and Infrastructure during the presidency of Fernando de la Rúa.



Javier Milei

Deputy for La Libertad Avanza - City of Buenos Aires.
Economist. Referent of the libertarian current. Disruptive profile.



José Luis Espert

Deputy for Avanza Libertad - Province of Buenos Aires.
Economist and agricultural producer. Referent of liberalism.



Political tools

Consensus agenda, alliance building and internal rearrangements



In the new Congress, it is expected that the Frente de Todos will have to negotiate vote by vote and law by law. Since it does not have a legislative majority and has a fragile structure of parliamentary allies, the Government will have to give up its reform agenda and bet on initiatives that may gather some level of political consensus. In addition, it will have to make an effort to avoid the breakup of the bloc, while maintaining its provincial allies.

Another point to consider is that in a Congress where the balance of power is even, more than ever each vote is worth one. In this sense, there may be greater incentives for passes, ruptures and circumstantial alliances. In short, volatile and thematic majorities could be formed and, thus, legislative paralysis could be avoided.

A representative example of how the parliamentary discussion could take place in the future is the legislative process that followed the recently approved healthy food law. At first, the government did not obtain a quorum for its treatment, since the opposition was absent from the chamber in protest for not having incorporated in the agenda issues of their interest. After days of negotiations, the ruling party and the opposition reached a consensus on a new agenda that would include some of the demands of the different political fronts. In the end, the dynamics of "give and take" prevailed.

Regarding the Executive, it is possible to think that the tensions that were exposed after the defeat in the primaries were not completely solved with the re-launching of the Cabinet of Ministers. In this sense, the leaders of the political space will have to face negotiations to decide how power will be distributed during the next two years. It is unlikely that everything will continue as it has been up to now. The failure at the polls is a strong argument for those seeking to increase their decision-making power within the coalition.

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