

ARGENTINA

Date of Elections: 3 November 1985

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for one-half (127) of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Argentina, the National Congress, comprises the Chamber of Senators and the Chamber of Deputies.

The Chamber of Senators has 46 members elected for a term of 9 years, one-third of the seats being renewed every 3 years. There are 2 Senators for each of the country's 22 provinces and the Federal Capital.

The Chamber of Deputies has 254 members elected for 4 years, one-half of the seats being renewed every 2 years.

Electoral System

All Argentine citizens at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote unless disqualified by law.

A register of electors is compiled at the national level and permanently kept up to date. Registration is automatic for native Argentinians, but naturalized citizens must ask for it three years after naturalization. Voting is compulsory, with some exceptions (old age, illness, great distance from polling stations); penalties for abstention consist of a fine equivalent to approximately US\$20 and prohibition to hold public office or employment for three years.

Any candidate for being a Deputy must be at least 25 years old, have held Argentine citizenship for at least four years, and must either have been born in the district in which he is a candidate or must have resided there for at least two years immediately prior to the date of the elections. Any candidate for being a Senator must be at least 30 years old and must either have been born on the territory of the province in which he is a candidate or resided there for at least two years preceding the date of the elections. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of Minister of the Government, provincial governor, clergyman, judge and any public office (unless permitted by Congress, lawyers cannot practice their profession as long as they belong to Congress).

Deputies are elected on the basis of population in each of the 24 electoral constituencies by party-list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the d'Hondt method. Senators are elected by simple majority by the provincial legislative bodies.

Chamber of Deputies seats which become vacant between general elections are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as nominal members. Senate vacancies are filled through by-elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The mid-term congressional elections coincided with those for provincial senators and deputies and municipal offices. The poll was widely viewed as a referendum on President of the Republic Raul Alfonsin's economic programme, which had been successful in bringing down inflation but at the cost of higher unemployment and falling real wages. Mr. Alfonsin had been in power since December 1983.

On polling day, the ruling centrist Radical Civic Union (UCR) maintained its majority position in the Chamber of Deputies (130 seats), although it made smaller gains than had been expected. The main opposition Justicialist Party (Peronists), split by internal divisions, gained a smaller percentage of the vote than at the previous (1983) general elections.

Statistics

I. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies

Number of registered electors.	18,653,447
Voters.	14,817,122 (79.43%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	272,672
Valid votes.	14,544,450

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats won at 1985 Elections	Total Number of Seats
Radical Civic Union (UCR) . . .	127	6,609,635	45	65	130
Justicialist Party.	127	5,298,131	36	47	103
<u>Intransigent Party.</u>	127	928,980	0.6	5	6
Central Democratic Union . . .	127	540,024	0.4	2	3
<u>Others</u>	29			8	12
				<u>127</u>	<u>254</u>

