

## ARGENTINA

Date of Elections: 6 September 1987

### Purposes 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 Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

The Senate 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.

Candidates for the Chamber of Deputies 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.

### Background and Outcome of the Elections

The mid-term congressional elections were held simultaneously with those for provincial governors and deputies as well as local posts. The results were expected to have a significant impact on both the candidates in and the outcome of the 1989 presidential race.

Economic issues (foreign debt, inflation, labour unrest) were at the forefront of the campaign debate, as were the plans of President of the Republic Raul Alfonsin for reform to tackle these problems as well as constitutional questions. The President's governing Radical Civic Union (UCR) was once again opposed primarily by the centre-left (Peronist) Justicialist Party. Only 29 incumbents of the 127 seats contested stood for re-election.

On polling day, the centrist UCR lost its absolute majority in the Lower House but retained a plurality, while the Peronists (especially in governorships) and the smaller, centre-right Union of the Democratic Centre recorded gains. Some observers attributed this outcome to discontent with the Government's economic management. On 16 September, President Alfonsin reshuffled his Cabinet, replacing five members.

### Statistics

#### 1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies

Number of registered electors. . . . .	19,453,121	
Voters. . . . .	15,696,330	(80.68%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	319,667	
Valid votes. . . . .	15,376,663	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats won at 1987 Elections	Total Number of Seats
Radical Civic Union (UCR) . . . . .	127	5,948,610	37.3	60	117 (-13)
Justicialist Party . . . . .	127	6,609,012	<b>41.5</b>	57	<b>105 (+4)</b>
Union of the Democra- tic Centre . . . . .	127	917,499	5.7	1	7 (+4)
Intransigent Party . . . . .	127	322,611	2.0	2	5 (-D)
Others . . . . .		1,678,931	13.5	7	20 (+6)
				127	254

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Profession*

Lawyers. . . . .	.105
Employees. . . . .	.28
Doctors. . . . .	.27
Merchants. . . . .	.23
Teachers. . . . .	.15
Businessmen. . . . .	.7
Accountants. . . . .	.7
Engineers. . . . .	.5
Journalists. . . . .	.4
Farmers. . . . .	.4
Chemists. . . . .	.3
Architects. . . . .	.2
Veterinarians. . . . .	.2
Military. . . . .	.2
Others. . . . .	.20
	254

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men. . . . .	.242
Women. . . . .	.12
	254

4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*  
(by birth year)

1900-1920. . . . .	.21
1921-1940. . . . .	.122
1941 on . . . . .	J_H
	254