

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Date of Elections: May 16, 1978

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of the Dominican Republic, the Congress, comprises the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

The Chamber of Deputies consists of 91 members elected for 4 years by the people of the provinces and the National District in the proportion of one for every 50,000 inhabitants or fraction thereof greater than 25,000; in no case, however, are there fewer than two deputies from a province.

The Senate consists of 27 members elected for 4 years in the proportion of one for each province and one for the National District.

Electoral System

All citizens who are at least 18 years of age or those who are or have been married have the right to vote, with the exception of members of the armed forces or the police. This right is lost in the event of an irrevocable conviction for treason, espionage or conspiracy against the Republic, or for taking up arms or lending aid or participating in any attack against it; it is suspended in cases of irrevocable sentence to criminal punishment (until rehabilitation), legally declared judicial interdiction (while it is in effect) and acceptance, while in Dominican territory, of an office or employment from a foreign Government without prior authorization from the executive power.

While the electoral register is regularly revised every 10 years, the Central Electoral Board may order a revision any time. Voting is compulsory for all citizens.

To be eligible for either Chamber, a citizen must be at least 25 years of age, have full enjoyment of his civil and political rights and be a native of the territorial district that elects him, or have resided therein for at least five consecutive years. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with any other public office or position.

Candidates must be nominated by a political party recognized by the Central Electoral Board; they are chosen by a convention of their party,

which then submits these names to the competent electoral board. Independent candidates may only stand if they are backed by a political group which has an organization and a programme similar to that of a political party.

Deputies are elected in the provinces and the National District on the basis of a closed party-list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the d'Hondt method. Senators, on the other hand, are elected from single-member constituencies via simple majority vote.

Substitutes chosen at the same time as titular parliamentarians fill the seats of the latter which become vacant between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The congressional elections were held simultaneously with those for President of the Republic.

Prior to the poll, outgoing President Joaquin Balaguer of the military-backed conservative Reformist Party (PR) and leaders of the primary opposition, the centrist Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) had agreed to a "non-aggression" pact that would guarantee a peaceful electoral campaign. Under the agreement, as disclosed by PRD leader Antonio Guzman, the parties concerned pledged to ensure that the election was orderly, respect the results of the voting, support the efforts of the next Government to develop the country economically and strengthen its democratic institutions, and guarantee the safety of the losing candidates and their supporters.

The vote count was interrupted by the military. It was then resumed and Mr. Guzman won the presidential race, ending 12 years of Balaguer rule. The PRD also won majorities in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Congress*

Number of registered electors. 2,282,611
Voters. 1,700,000 (approx.)

Political Group	Number of Seats in the Chamber	
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Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD)	49	15
Reformist Party (PR).	42	12
	91	27