

The Mexico Institute's 2015 Elections Guide

2014 Political-Electoral Reform



Last year, much of the focus in Mexico was regarding the approval of reforms that potentially could boost economic activity, competitiveness, and quality of public services. Within that, most of the attention was given to the energy and the telecommunications reforms. Although they were key, both for the issues that they change and the long-term effects that they could have, in January of 2014 a political-electoral reform was also approved.

Originally, the discussion in Congress regarding the political-electoral reform was driven primarily by opposition parties but subsequently supported and modified by all political forces represented in Congress. The 2015 elections will be the first test for the reform, therefore it is important to highlight the 8 key aspects of it:

1. New national electoral body. The National Electoral Institute (INE for its acronym in Spanish) replaced the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE for its acronym in Spanish). The new institution will be responsible for organizing both local and federal elections. In addition, the Institute will also concentrate the following responsibilities: oversight of election campaigns, regulation of surveys, preliminary

nary results, and election monitoring, and coordination of the civil service both at the local and at the federal level, among others. The appointment of the new local electoral officials will depend on the INE, although the funding for those local bodies will still be a function of local Congresses.

2. Reelection. In support of the arguments that reelection is more representative as an electoral system and that public servants elected by popular vote have more incentives to be closer to their constituents in the presence of reelection, and against the historic rejection in Mexico against this figure, legislators allowed the reelection of Federal Deputies and Senators for up to 12 years. For the former, this could mean up to 3 elections and for the latter up to 1. Similarly, mayors and local deputies can also be reelected; however, the specific mechanisms depend on local authorities. Undoubtedly, this is a change in the electoral dynamic in Mexico; the first generation of public servants who may be reelected will be in the 2018 federal election.

3. Election annulment. The reform increased the grounds for annulment in elections, specifically stating that the election will be annulled if there was excess funding of it. In the same sense, auditing rules also changed to include common practices not included before in regulation, such as private financing or including other good accounting practices such as online oversight. Although this effort is important, its compliance looks complicated because, on one hand, the complexity of the rules increased for the authorities, and, on the other hand, it is not clear that the INE will have the available resources to effectively monitor the resources flowing into a political campaign, namely those in cash.

4. Sanction of electoral offenses. The reform increased sanctions and expanded the definitions under which a public servant may violate electoral rules. Additionally, some changes were included to sanction illegal funding in campaigns. Furthermore, accompanying this legal change, it included the creation of an autonomous body to prosecute electoral offenses, which would be attached to the new Attorney General Office (*Fiscalía General de la República*), an institution that will be replacing the current *Procuraduría General de la República* that depends on the President. As in the previous case, the problem is not the harshness of the punishments but the compliance and the effective authority that the institutions have to enforce the law.

5. Coalition governments and other checks and balances. The President now can opt for a coalition government with any of the parties represented in Congress. The coalition agreement would have to be ratified by the Senate, as well as receive the approval of several positions that are now appointed directly by the President. In the same sense of shared responsibility, other changes were included such as the fact that the Chamber of Deputies has to approve the appointment of the Ministry of Finances and the Senate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the constitutional autonomy of the National Council for Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL for its acronym in Spanish).

6. Voting abroad and gender parity. In regards to voting abroad, it expands the voting choices for Mexicans abroad to now include, not only the President, but also Senators and Governors. While the number of Mexicans voting abroad has been modest, the figures could potentially change coupled with the fact that now is easier to get the voter card outside of the country and with more options to vote, including voting in embassies and consulates abroad or electronic voting schemes. In regards to gender parity, specific rules were included to guarantee gender equality in both candidates (e.g. the fact that a female candidate must have a substitute that is also a woman) and in the national lists for proportional representation in each party (e.g. the list will have to be formed by alternating men and women).

With this in mind, is interesting to analyze the political representation of women in Mexico. The country ranks 49 out of 190 countries in the percentage of women in Executive and ministerial positions. Although the percentage of women in the Legislative and Judicial branches have been increasing over time, there is still work to do in order to further women participation in key political posi-

tions in the country. Check out the infographic below with some data on this issue and check out the original interactive version here (<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/political-representation-women-mexico>).

7. Independent candidates. This was one of the issues that received a greater push by civil society. In the reform, independent candidates were regulated, establishing requirements and benefits for their participation in elections. Some of the requirements are: public demonstration to the INE, open and certificate a bank account to manage resources for the campaign, hand to the INE signatures equivalent of 2% of the nominal list of the place where the candidate could potentially be elected supporting his or her candidacy, among others. Some of the benefits are: independent candidates will have representatives to the INE and in the polling stations, access to public and private funding, and access to radio and television advertising.

8. New political parties. This issue is especially important in the 2015 federal elections, because the challenge for the new political parties (i.e. MORENA, ES, and PH (<https://mexicoinsitutonelections2015.wordpress.com/the-parties/>)) to maintain the registry is having a vote of 3% of the total votes received. Similarly, rules for electoral alliances were included and the possibility of forming blocks to promote specific policies without necessarily implying an election commitment among various political forces.

As stated before, these 2015 elections will be the first test to the reform, in the sense that many of the new institutions have to work properly to ensure citizens and candidates a fair competition. Other desirable results are to be seen such as more competitive elections and a more representative political model. In any event, it is important to take into account the latest changes in the electoral rules during this electoral process.

Further reading:

- To understand the reform (in Spanish): Excelsior (<http://www.excelsior.com.mx/especial/reforma-politica/el-abc-para-entender-la-reforma>), Animal Político (<http://www.animalpolitico.com/2014/05/en-que-consiste-la-reforma-politico-electoral/>), INE (http://www.ine.mx/archivos3/portal/historico/contenido/Internacional_English/) (in English), SRE (<http://embamex.sre.gob.mx/malasia/index.php/mexico-today/362-polreform>) (in English).
- An analysis (<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/look-mexico%E2%80%99s-political-reform-the-expert-take>) from our Director, Duncan Wood. (<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/staff/duncan-wood>)

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MEXICO



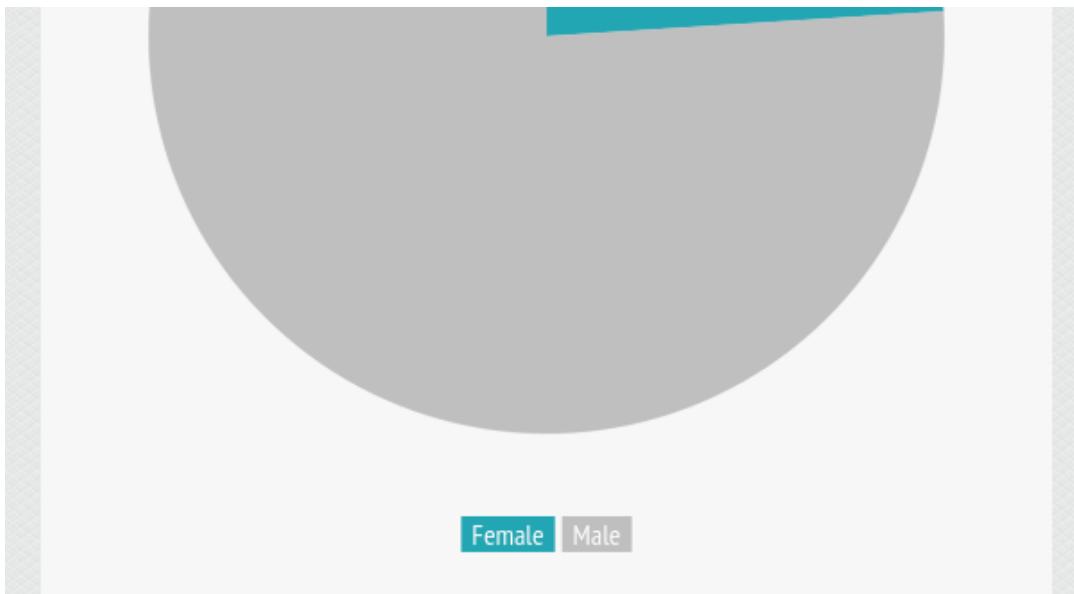
Women represent 52% of Mexico's population

MEXICO RANKS 49 OUT OF 190 COUNTRIES IN THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN EXECUTIVE AND MINISTERIAL POSITIONS

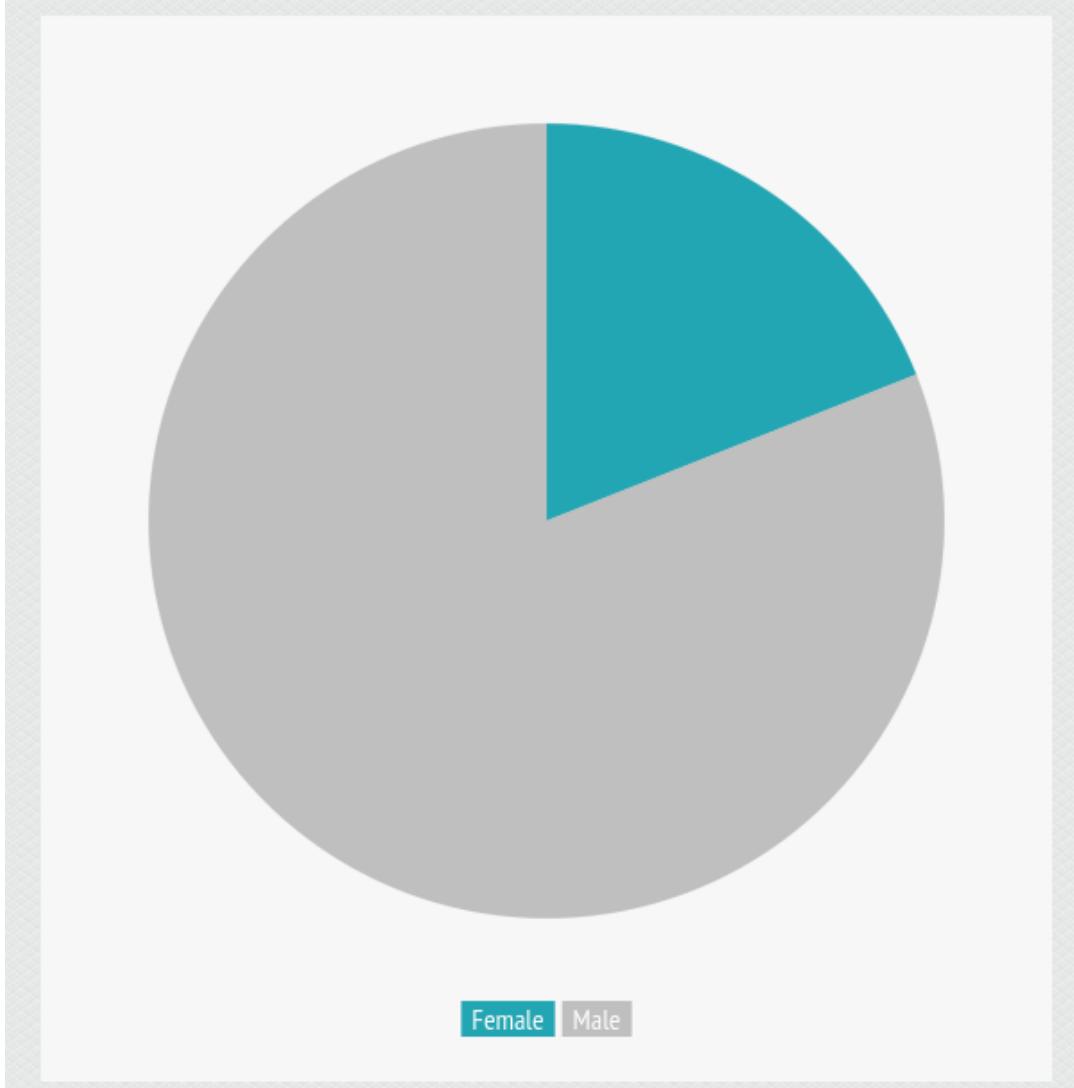
THESE WOMEN INCLUDE: ARELY GOMEZ GONZALEZ, ATTORNEY GENERAL / ROSARIO ROBLES, MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT / MERCEDES JUAN LOPEZ, MINISTER OF HEALTH / CLAUDIA RUIZ MASSIEU SALINAS, MINISTER OF TOURISM

In Congress, women occupy 37% of the seats; ten years ago this was only 24%.





In the Senate, women now occupy 34% of the seats; ten years this was only 19%.



6 Women have been Governors in Mexico throughout history in the states of Colima, Tlaxcala, Yucatán,

**1 in 3**

Women have seats in Congress

**2**

Out of the 11 ministers in Mexico's Supreme Court of Justice are women

**25%**

Local Chamber of Deputies are women

**20%**

Federal Judge and Magistrate positions are held by women

**7%**

Women are mayors



Source: <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/in-english/2015/women-power-mexico-102613.html>

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(https://mexicoinsitutonelections2015.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/political_representation_of_women_in_mexico-3.png)

2 thoughts on “2014 Political-Electoral Reform”

1. Pingback: [Mexican Officials Reassure Public Amid Pre-Election Assassinations | The Mexico Institute's 2015 Elections Guide](#)
2. Pingback: [Meet Jaime Rodríguez “El Bronco”: Mexico’s First Independent Governor And A Controversial Figure In Mexican Politics | Xpatnation](#)