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LADB Staff

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## **Number of Registered Voters Surges Ahead of July Elections**

*by LADB Staff*

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In mid-January, the federal electoral institute (Instituto Federal Electoral, IFE) reported that 51.5 million Mexicans are now enrolled in the federal electoral registry (Registro Federal Electoral, RFE), allowing them to participate in the mid-term congressional and local elections scheduled for July 6. According to the IFE, the number of voters eligible to participate has increased by about 4.3 million since the last nationwide election in August 1994, when President Ernesto Zedillo and much of the current Chamber of Deputies and Senate were elected to office (see SourceMex, 08/24/94).

IFE spokespersons said 2.5 million of the new voters enrolled in the RFE in the three-month period between October 1996 and mid-January 1997, when the institute embarked on an intensive campaign to increase voter registration. Roughly 70% of the voters who registered since October are citizens between the age of 17 and 22. IFE spokespersons said the voter registration deadline was set for mid-January to give the various political parties ample time to conduct their own review of RFE voter rosters before the mid-year elections.

Enrollment especially high in Mexico City Interest in voter registration was especially high in Mexico City, which will hold its first-ever mayoral elections. The new mayor will replace Oscar Espinosa Villarreal, who, like most of his predecessors, was appointed by the president of Mexico. According to Manuel Gonzales Oropeza, president of the Mexico City IFE, more than 6 million residents of the capital are now registered to vote. (Sources: La Jornada, Novedades, 01/16/97; The News, 01/17/97)

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