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Familiar Faces To Serve In Chamber Of Deputies And Senate

by LADB Staff

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The three major political parties will have several familiar faces in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Many new members of the Chamber of Deputies at one time served as governors, Cabinet secretaries, local legislators, or party officials. Similarly, many new senators previously served in the Chamber of Deputies or other elected or party-leadership positions. Final statistics published by the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) confirm the coalition formed by the Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) and Partido Verde Ecologista Mexicano (PVEM) won a small majority of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, but the long-ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional took more seats than any single party. The PAN-PVEM, which ran as the Alianza por El Cambio, received 223 seats through direct election or allocation based on the percentage of the vote received. But only 208 of those seats will be filled by PAN members, one short of the 209 seats won by the PRI. The center-left Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD) and its four allies, which ran as the Alianza por Mexico, will control 68 seats, but only 53 of those seats will be filled by the PRD.

Former party presidents, senators to serve in lower house

The list of new deputies, who will serve for three years, includes former party presidents Felipe Calderon Hinojosa of the PAN and Fernando Ortiz Arana of the PRI. Ortiz Arana also served in the Mexican Senate and was defeated in the Queretaro gubernatorial race. Several former senators will now serve in the lower house. The list includes Felix Salgado Macedonio and Auldarico Hernandez Geronimo of the PRD; Eduardo Andrade, Humberto Mayans, and Beatriz Paredes of the PRI; and Emilio Goicochea of the PAN. Also prominent on the list is Federico de la Madrid Cordero of the PRI, son of former President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988). One PRI at-large seat was allocated to businessman Eddie Varon Levy, a Mexican citizen who is a permanent US resident. Varon Levy, who resides in Los Angeles, is the first person living abroad to gain a seat in the Mexican Congress. The PRD delegation will probably be headed by Marti Batres Guardarrama, recently the party leader in the Mexico City legislative assembly (Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal, ALDF). Another familiar name among the PRD ranks in the lower house is Alejandra Barrales, secretary-general of the Asociacion de Sobrecargos de Aviacion, ASSA). Barrales was the chief spokesperson for ASSA during a threatened strike against Aeromexico in June (see SourceMex, June 7, 2000).

Senate becomes more divided after 2000 election

In the Senate, 92 of the 128 seats were up for election this year. The PRI lost full control of the Senate but still retained a plurality. The party managed to win 47 seats either through direct election or allocation, compared with 38 for the PAN and PVEM and 11 for the PRD and its coalition allies. This means the PRI will now control 60 of the 128 seats in the upper house, compared with 51 for the PAN-PVEM, and 17 for the PRD and other small parties. The PRI controlled 76 Senate seats after the 1997 mid-term election. Preliminary estimates had the PRI winning only 58 seats in the upper house this year, but the party gained two additional seats once tabulations from Sinaloa and Puebla were
completed (see SourceMex, July 5, 2000). The list of PAN senators includes familiar faces such as the party's 1996 presidential candidate and former legislative leader Diego Fernandez de Cevallos, and former federal deputies Fauzi Hamdan and Carlos Medina Plascencia. The PRI Senate delegation is also loaded with prominent figures, including former Puebla governor Manuel Bartlett Diaz, ex-party president and former federal deputy Humberto Roque Villanueva, and outgoing party president Dulce Maria Sauri Riancho. Bartlett and Roque ran in the PRI's first-ever presidential primary, which they lost to Francisco Labastida Ochoa (see SourceMex, November 11, 1999). Luis Colosio Fernandez, father of the PRI's 1994 slain presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, will also receive an at-large Senate seat. New PRD senators include former federal deputy Demetrio Sodi de la Tijera and Lazaro Cardenas Batel, son of presidential candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas and grandson of former President Lazaro Cardenas (1934-1940). Cardenas Batel is mentioned as a likely candidate for the PRD nomination for governor of Michoacan state in late 2001.

**PAN wins majority in Mexico City legislature**

In Mexico City, the PAN narrowly defeated the PRD to gain a majority in the ALDF. The initial count had shown the PRD with a narrow lead, but this was reversed when final numbers from three electoral districts were tallied. The final data from the Instituto Electoral del Distrito Federal (IEDF) showed the PAN won 21 of the 40 seats up for direct election in the ALDF, compared with 19 for the PRD. The PRD has appealed the final count before the city's electoral tribunal (Tribunal Electoral del Distrito Federal, TEDF). If the results stand, the PAN will have 24 seats in the ALDF, including the at-large seats based on a percentage of the vote received. In comparison, the PRD will only have 21 of these seats. The PVEM, a PAN ally in the election, will receive another 10 seats, twice as many as the PRI, which failed to win a single directly elected seat. The remainder of the 66 seats will be distributed among six smaller parties. Jose Luis Luege Tamargo, PAN president in Mexico City, acknowledged his party was helped by the immense popularity of presidential candidate Vicente Fox among voters in the capital. "Vicente was 20 points ahead in pre-election polls in the capital," said Luege Tamargo. "I had no doubt he would boost the vote [for local PAN candidates]." Luege said the PAN members in the ALDF expect to work closely with PRD mayor-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. "We are not going to put up obstacles or barriers or limitations," said Luege Tamargo. Lopez Obrador expressed similar optimism. "I am not worried because the mood of the times is for dialogue and consensus," said the mayor-elect, the third consecutive PRD mayor to govern Mexico City. (Sources: Excelsior, 07/06/00, 07/07/00; Los Angeles Times, 07/08/00; Proceso, Associated Press, 07/09/00; El Universal, 07/06/00, 07/10/00; Novedades, 07/10/00; Reforma, 07/06/00, 07/10/00, 07/11/00; La Jornada, 07/06/00, 07/07/00, 07/10/00, 07/11/00; The News, The New York Times, 07/11/00)