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Panama: Workers & Students Demonstrate Against Government Economic Policies

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On Oct. 16, an estimated 1,000 people marched through downtown Panama City protesting the government's economic austerity policies. Participants included members of 23 labor and student groups. The demonstration was organized by the National Right to Life Coordinator (Coordinadora Nacional por el Derecho a la Vida). The demonstrators called on legislators to reject proposed tax reforms including a new 10% consumption tax for restaurant patrons, and changes to the nation's social security system. In addition, protesters demanded that legislators pressure the government to scrap the economic adjustment program adopted in June 1991 at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. On Oct. 14, the Legislative Assembly commenced debate on a bill calling for the privatization of 11 state-owned enterprises. The next items on the Assembly's agenda are the proposed tax and social security reforms. (Basic data from AFP, 10/16/91)

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