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Nicaragua: National Assembly Sustains One Presidential Veto, Overrides Another

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On Nov. 12, in a 47 to 44 vote, the National Assembly overrode a presidential veto on reforms to legislation regarding the national budget. The 47 votes against the veto were cast by National Opposition Union (UNO) deputies. Five UNO deputies joined the 39 Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) legislators in supporting the veto. The occasion marked the first time a presidential veto was defeated in 25 years. Under the new budget procedure reform law, the Assembly can modify the budget expenditures ceiling specified by the executive branch. Next, government ministries and agencies gained autonomy in managing respective budgets. Finally, the executive must submit to the Assembly a detailed account of all public employee positions and corresponding salaries. On Nov. 13, the Assembly sustained a presidential veto on legislation which would have prevented the executive branch from determining the use of former military installations. Supporters of the legislation rejected by President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro wanted the installations to be exclusively designated for use as schools or health services centers. In this vote, 10 UNO delegates and the 39 Sandinista delegates supported the veto, while 41 UNO delegates voted against it. Daily newspaper Barricada reported that Andres Robles, one of the 10 UNO delegates who voted to sustain the veto, was subsequently expelled from Assembly president Alfredo Cesar's Social Democrat Party (PSD). (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 11/12/91, 11/13/91; Barricada, 11/13/91, 11/14/91)