

**Main Topics**

- *Judicial reform moves forward after warrantless search provision dropped*
- *Manlio Fabio Beltrones lowers expectations on energy reform*
- *Juan Camilo Mouriño hit by conflict of interest allegations*
- *Smoking ban passed*

The Chamber of Deputies approved by a vote of 462 to 6 the **judicial reform**, after dropping the controversial provision that would have allowed police to make warrantless searches. The reform seeks to make the federal judicial system more effective by adopting “oral trials” for criminal cases. The Senate, which had previously passed the bill, is expected to approve the revised version, which must then be passed by a majority of the 31 state legislatures.

President Calderón noted: “The Chamber of Deputies took a very important step forward in establishing the Rule of Law.... The reform will enable Mexico to have clearer criminal justice procedures. In place of an inquisitorial system, carried out exclusively and monopolistically by the public prosecutor (*Ministerio Público*), we are going to an adversarial system, where the parties will be able to compete in conditions of equality before a judge, where all the evidence will be disclosed...before the public, and where the State is also being given greater powers to fight crime effectively.” (Universal 2/26, Milenio 2/28, Presidencia)

Manlio Fabio Beltrones, the PRI Senate leader, said the only way to move forward on **energy reform** was to separate it into two phases: first, to tackle Pemex autonomy; second, to debate the deep water exploration issues. Speaking in a *Reforma* interview, Beltrones said the consensus did not now exist in the Senate for allowing private investment in deep water exploration and production. He said that first “it is necessary to take other measures to strengthen Pemex while taking maximum advantage of existing resources that lie in [existing] fields.” Beltrones also said that risk contracts were “not acceptable,” but Pemex could be allowed to form strategic alliances with other state-owned companies. (Reforma 2/28)

**Key Dates**

- 03/16/08:** PRD elects party president
- 03/18/08:** Anniversary of nationalization of oil
- 07/06/08:** Nayarit state elections
- 09/28/08:** Coahuila state elections
- 10/05/08:** Guerrero state elections

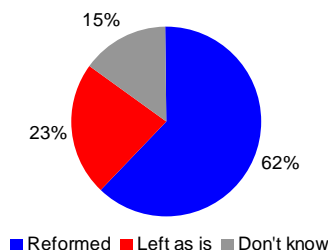
AMLO produced documents showing that Secretary of Government **Juan Camilo Mouriño** signed no-bid contracts in 2002-3 with Pemex Refining on behalf of his family’s company that provides transport services to Pemex. He was at the time serving as chief of staff to Secretary of Energy Felipe Calderón –who was *ex officio* chairman of the board of Pemex. *El Universal* editorialized that, “It’s very difficult to demonstrate that there isn’t a conflict of interest, although it’s hardly proof of a hidden agenda to privatize Pemex.... It is precisely the closeness of Mouriño to the President that obliges [him] to clarify totally this notorious and unseemly framework of ties and to correct them to the extent possible.” Columnist Jorge Zepeda Patterson noted that this disclosure “puts the President’s dauphin in a very awkward spot [and] leaves him as a very poor negotiator for a reform that is supposed not to favor the private sector.” Mouriño denied the allegations of self-dealing, but did not contest the accuracy of the documents. (Universal 2/28-29, Reforma 3/2)

The Senate passed (101-5) nationwide **restrictions on smoking** in public places, and set stiff fines for establishments that don’t comply. The law requires larger health warnings and outlaws the sale of cigarettes by street vendors. The Mexico City Assembly approved even tougher rules that completely ban indoor smoking in public places.

**Opinion Polls**

A nationwide GEA-ISA poll found that more than 60% of those surveyed favored reforming Pemex, and a bare majority favored allowing private sector participation in refining, transportation, exploration, and production. Support increased among those who said they were informed about the issues. (www.isa.org.mx)

Should Pemex be reformed, or left as is?



Do you agree or disagree that the private sector be allowed by law to participate with Pemex in oil production?

