

Topics

- **President Calderón negotiates limited freeze on food prices**
- **IFE forbids calling AMLO the 'legitimate president'**
- **Supreme Court upholds the federal pension reform**
- **Partial reform of Presidential-Congressional relations approved**
- **IFE gets three new board members**

Key Dates

- 5/13-7/22: Energy debate**
- 7/06: Nayarit state elections**
- 7/27: PRD "Citizen Consultation" on energy reform**
- 9/01: Presidential Informe**
- 9/28: Coahuila state elections**

The Chamber of Mexican Industrialists (Concamin) and President Calderón agreed to **freeze prices** of some 150 food products ranging from canned tuna fish to coffee until the end of the year. Other products, such as cooking oil, would have a shorter freeze. Economists estimated that the items comprised about 28% of the basic food consumption basket, and doubted the measure would have much impact on consumer price inflation. (Reforma 6/18, Universal 6/19)

By a vote of 5-4, the **Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) board fined the PRD and PT** and ordered them to stop calling Andrés Manuel López Obrador the 'legitimate president' in their broadcast ads. The ruling was based on the electoral law provision that prohibits broadcast messages that 'denigrate or slander' other participants in the political process. The PRD said it would appeal the decision to the Federal Electoral Tribunal. "At the end of the day these kinds of actions only benefit AMLO by reviving him and putting back in the limelight," observed the *Templo Mayor* column. (Reforma 6/18, Universal 6/18, www.ife.org.mx)

The **Supreme Court ruled as constitutional** all major provisions of last year's **federal workers' pension reform law**, including the creation of a new pension fund called Pension-isse. The Court's decision resolves the 223,000 lawsuits filed against the reform by participants in the old system, and was a major vindication of the approach taken by the Calderón government. "The changes to the system will benefit the workers since it assures the financial survival of the ISSSTE," concluded Minister Sergio Valls. (Reforma 6/19)

During a three-day special session, Congress approved some new measures to govern the **relationship between the executive and legislative powers**. A new format for the President's annual message, or *Informe*, was approved. The President will no longer have to deliver the message in person, but may send it in writing. Congress, in turn, will be able to formally question the *Informe*, and the President will be obliged to respond to such questions within 15 days. "The *Informe* will no longer be a pharaonic and controversial event, and it becomes an exercise of accountability for the President," said PRI Senator Pedro Joaquin Coldwell.

Two other reform measures failed to get the necessary two-thirds majority. One would have ended the presidential 'pocket veto,' or the ability of the president to kill a law approved by Congress simply by refusing to sign it before the end of the congressional session. The other would have given the President the ability to submit up to two 'preferential initiatives' to Congress during each session that Congress would have been obliged to vote on during that session. (Universal 6/19-21)

The Congress also approved three **new IFE board members** who will serve until 2013. Each of the three major parties essentially nominated one member who was satisfactory to the other two. The IFE board that will oversee the 2009 mid-term elections has a new president, five new members, and three continuing members, as compared to the IFE that oversaw the 2006 national elections. (Proceso 6/21, Reforma 6/21)

Polls

A *Universal* poll (6/19) showed PRI darling Enrique Peña Nieto, the Governor of the State of Mexico, besting either Marcelo Ebrard or AMLO in the PRD stronghold of Mexico City. In the trial matchups for the 2012 presidential race, Peña Nieto beat each of the *perredistas* by 5-6%. Other respondents said they wouldn't vote or didn't know.

