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## Uruguayans Back the Streets Over Looming Neoliberal Reform Bill

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Uruguay's Montevideo Secondary Education Teacher's Association (ADES) called Monday for a 24-hour national strike on July 2, against the Urgent Consideration Law (LUC) that is currently under debate on the national congress.

On Jan. 22, the right-wing National Party of Uruguay, whose candidate Luis Lacalle Pou won the November 2019 presidential election, submitted the LUC. The bill that has been opposed by workers and union leaders as it unravels neoliberal measures regarding health, education, housing, and security, among other topics.

Uruguay's Constitution allows the president to propose urgent laws that pass automatically if not rejected or substituted after an abbreviated debate of no more than 90 days in the legislature.

Politicians from opposition parties and civil society have stressed that the urgency imposed on such a broad package of legislation curtails democratic debate. As the 90 days gap shortens, representatives from the Broad Front stated that "it is an affectation of democratic guarantees to pretend to discuss more than 500 articles covering the most diverse topics in just 75 days".

The LUC has already been rejected by Uruguayans who took to the streets on June 4, to demonstrate against a law that "dismantles policies that have been carried out for the benefit of the entire population" as remarked by the President of the left-wing Broad Front Javier Miranda.

The project, which includes over 500 articles, includes the privatization of public enterprises, the criminalization of social demonstrations, and reinforces the role of representatives of private education. It also lacks specific articles to address gender violence.

The decision to call the national strike came after the Council of Secondary Education banned the use of masks

with the phrase "To educate. Not to profit."

The President of ADES Javier Iglesias said that the decision by the Council will be denounced before the National Human Rights institution since the aim of the government moving forward with the law is to suppress freedom of expression and workers' rights.

The strike on July 2 will be the third in recent days. Back on May 14, opposition groups protested against the Urgent Consideration Law (LUC) in front of the Parliament despite social isolation recommendations in the context of COVID-19.

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