
Cuban Citizens Set To Debate Draft Constitution

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Cuban citizens on and off the island will have four months to debate the country's proposed Magna Carta in 135 public forums before it heads back to the Parliament.

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans now have access to the country's constitutional draft, which citizens will have between Aug. 13 and Nov. 15 to publically debate in over 135 participatory meetings throughout the island.

So far 700,000 copies of the draft version were distributed in less than a week and due to high demand that number is expected to rise to over one million by Tuesday. Digital copies can also be obtained from state institutional websites, according to Prensa Latina.

Once the island's 11 million plus citizens are familiar with the document they'll have the chance to debate the document in over 135 public meetings to take place in community centers and public institution buildings in the island's 169 municipalities between August and November.

The public forums will be facilitated by over 15,000 citizens trained to lead the forums and register suggestions.

In a historical move, the more than 1.4 million Cubans living abroad will also be able to participate in debates, writing in their suggestions, starting the first week of September via Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website portal - www.nacionyemigracion.cu/.

Citizens' suggestions, critiques, and complaints will then be channeled to the IX version of the 605-seat National Assembly, which approved the current draft July 23.

Noteworthy changes to the proposed draft are the legalization of same-sex marriages and greater autonomy for municipal governments. The proposal set to be debated would also eliminate the People's Power provincial-level assemblies to be replaced with a council and governor.

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The constitution set to be debated over the next four months seeks to "reach greater levels of equity and social justice, as well as preserve and expand achievements of the Revolution," according to Granma.

After the citizen debate, the National Assembly will draft a final proposal to voted on in early 2019. Cuba's current constitution was passed in 1976 but had important amendments added in 1992 and 2002.
