
Fernandez Will Not Run in Argentina, but Sets Up Key Supporters

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The president's decision not to run for any office was a big surprise when the registration deadline passed at midnight on Saturday, given that many in the local press had speculated that she would run for at least a Mercosur parliamentary seat with an eye toward obtaining legislative exemption and other benefits.

Fernandez, who will leave the presidency on Dec. 10 when her second term ends, however, has put several of her ministers and influential La Campora leaders, including the founder of that group, her own son Maximo Kirchner, into candidacies of their own.

La Campora is a political youth organization that supports Fernandez and the agenda of her late husband and predecessor Nestor Kirchner.

"If and when the judicial situation and that of her entourage doesn't substantially worsen, the president probably will seek seclusion starting in December at El Calafate, her 'place in the world.' Perhaps she will also devote herself to making international speeches – something that fascinates her," analyst Patricio Giusto, the director of the Diagnostico Politico consulting firm, said Sunday.

The president also has seen to it that the governing Front for Victory's sole candidate for president in the Aug. 9 primaries, Buenos Aires Gov. Daniel Scioli, is a close confidant of hers and will guarantee the continuity of the Kirchnerist political movement if he wins the election in October.

Carlos Zannini, the legal and technical secretary to the presidency since May 2003, when Kirchner became president, will be Scioli's running mate.

Although Fernandez will not be running, she will pull in votes if she involves herself actively in the campaign, said analyst Rosendo Frage, with the Nueva Mayoria consulting outfit.

Maximo Kirchner, 38, will head the governing party's list of parliamentary candidates for Santa Cruz province, the cradle of Kirchnerism.

"If Scioli loses... at least the continuity of Kirchnerism is guaranteed via the significant legislative representation it will have," said Giusto, adding that Fernandez "leaves the presidency looking toward 2019, whoever wins this year."

Voter surveys agree at present that Scioli is favored by a plurality of between 30 percent and 35 percent.
