

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate Release

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Argentina Approves Historic Bill to Legalize Abortion

Yesterday, Argentina's Senate voted 38 to 29 to approve a bill legalizing abortion in the country. Argentina's president, Alberto Fernández has promised to sign this bill into law. The new law will make it legal for women to end pregnancies for any reason up to 14 weeks and in cases of rape or if needed to protect the women's health after that. The bill also stipulates that abortions will be free of charge in public hospitals. Prior to this vote, the country had only permitted abortion in cases of rape or if the pregnancy posed a risk to a woman's health.

The vote was the culmination of a years-long grass-roots advocacy campaign involving women's rights groups, feminist collectives, students, health professionals, legal professionals, other NGOs, and community-based organizations. Doctors have played an important role in this campaign, giving voice to the health consequences and human toll of the current legal restrictions. Physician-led advocacy will be even more crucial during the implementation of this new law, especially when conscientious refusal and social stigma may still make abortions difficult to obtain in some areas of the country.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 30 out of 34 countries either ban abortion outright, or allow it only on restricted grounds. Argentina joins Uruguay, Cuba and Guyana as the only countries in the region to allow abortion without restriction in early pregnancy. Argentina is now the largest nation in Latin America to legalize abortion.

Many pro-choice advocates see Argentina as a bellwether of change to come in the region. Dr. Laura Gil, co-lead of Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) Colombia said "There are growing calls to decriminalize abortion in a number of countries in Latin America. Many of these countries already have outspoken pro-choice movements which we hope will be energized and galvanized by the momentous vote in Argentina." GDC Colombia, member of the *Causa Justa* initiative, recently joined other organizations to file a lawsuit asking the Constitutional Court

to decriminalize abortion in the country. Advocates are taking meaningful measures to advance abortion access in other countries like Chile and Mexico.

Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) applauds the new legislation in Argentina and stands in solidarity with the advocates creating positive change elsewhere in Latin America.

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