



Restoring Confidence in Elections in Latin America

One of the major achievements in Latin America since the rapid expansion of democracy in the region beginning in the 1980s was the guarantee of free and fair elections, organized by competent and independent authorities. Though the region has long struggled to strengthen its democratic institutions, the reliability of elections, a democratic cornerstone, has rarely been questioned. Unfortunately, that is no longer true. *Today, Latin Americans have largely lost faith in elections*—a result of disinformation, problematic campaign finance systems, inadequate electoral technologies, political influence on electoral institutions, and unsubstantiated claims of fraud by losing candidates, among other factors. Confidence in electoral institutions fell from an average of 47% in 2006 to 31% in 2020, according to Latinobarómetro. Last year, public opinion researchers at Vanderbilt University found that less than half of Latin Americans believe their votes are counted correctly.

To restore confidence in elections, the Wilson Center's Latin America Program is launching a special initiative to produce recommendations that will address these and other challenges at a time of democratic backsliding in many parts of the region.

TOPICS

- 1 Challenges to the Independence of Electoral Authorities
- 2 Election Technologies
- 3 Disinformation
- 4 Inconsistent Funding for International Electoral Observation
- 5 Campaign Finance, Rules, and Enforcement
- 6 Fraudulent Claims of Fraud
- 7 Institutional Design of Electoral Institutions

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- Opportunity for panel participation by company CEO or appropriate senior executive
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