

# Mexico's 2024 Elections

May 7, 2024

On June 2, 2024, Mexico, a top U.S. trade and strategic partner, is scheduled to convene [elections](#) for more than 20,000 federal, state, and local offices, including the presidency, the entire congress (Senate and Chamber of Deputies), and eight governorships. The leading presidential candidates offer voters a [choice](#) on whether to elect President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's chosen successor, Claudia Sheinbaum, or the opposition alliance candidate, Xóchitl Gálvez, who has pledged to implement policy changes in several areas. Either candidate, if elected, would be Mexico's first female president.

The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress has undertaken various legislative and oversight initiatives related to issues involving cross-border cooperation with Mexico, fentanyl trafficking, migration, and continued implementation of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Members may wish to assess the election's results and their implications for ongoing cooperation on these and other issues in [U.S.-Mexico](#) relations.

## Electoral System and Context

Mexico's 2024 elections are to be the largest in the country's history. The president is to be elected by [plurality vote](#) and is scheduled to assume power on October 1, 2024. In the legislative contests, voters are to elect 128 senators and 500 members of congress (deputies). Mexico's constitution limits presidents to a single six-year term but allows nonconsecutive reelection to the Mexican congress.

The [legacy](#) of outgoing President López Obrador is likely to loom over the 2024 elections. Although some of his actions as president have stoked [controversy](#), López Obrador has maintained approval ratings above [60%](#) and overseen the transformation of his party, the left-leaning National Regeneration Movement ([MORENA](#)), into the dominant force in Mexican politics, replacing the centrist Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). MORENA currently holds a plurality of seats in the lower chamber, a majority of seats in the Senate, and 21 of 32 governorships. López Obrador's popularity [appears to stem](#) from his policies to improve living standards for poor and working-class Mexicans and his populist approach to politics, which emphasizes direct communication with the Mexican people.

Critics have accused López Obrador of [attempting](#) to weaken independent government institutions and the judiciary. For example, López Obrador proposed reforms that would have reduced the staff, authorities, and independence of the electoral authority and electoral court, aiming to reduce costs and fraud. The Mexican supreme court subsequently [blocked](#) most of those reforms.

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This electoral season is on track to be the most violent in Mexico's history. As of May 1, 2024, 29 candidates, mostly at the local level, had been slain. Some observers assert that Mexico's drug cartels engage in political violence, especially at the local level, to intimidate politicians, discourage voter turnout, and install candidates they can influence. According to one expert, Mexican "criminal groups increasingly shape ... who can run ... and who will be a successful candidate."

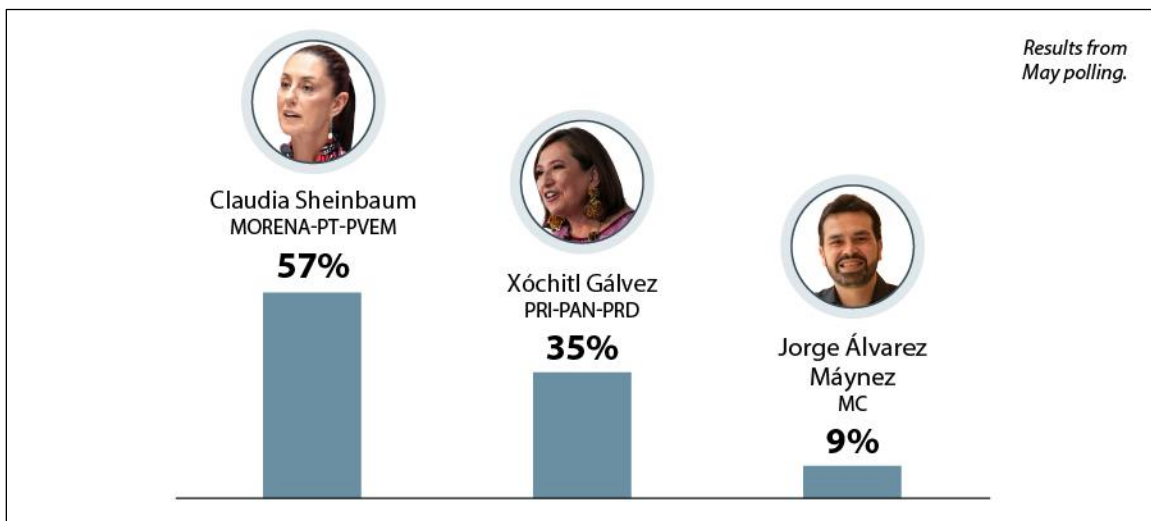
## Presidential Candidates

The leading presidential candidate, Claudia Sheinbaum, is a former mayor of Mexico City (2018-2023) and longtime ally of President López Obrador. Her MORENA-led coalition includes the Labor Party (PT) and the Green Ecological Party (PVEM). Sheinbaum, who has led the polls since the campaign began in March, has largely pledged to continue López Obrador's policies (see Figure 1). Some analysts assess that her reported pragmatism as mayor and scientific background could lead her to diverge from López Obrador on some issues. For example, Sheinbaum may seek private investment in renewable energy. Other analysts assert that Sheinbaum's candidacy derives much of its popularity from López Obrador's political base and he could continue to influence her administration.

Xóchitl Gálvez, a technology entrepreneur and former senator of Indigenous descent, is the candidate of the opposition coalition. Gálvez has united an ideologically diverse coalition, comprising the PRI, conservative National Action Party (PAN), and center-left Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD). Gálvez has signaled she would pursue more market-oriented economic policies, defend Mexico's independent institutions, and remove the military from policing and other civilian tasks, while maintaining current social programs.

Jorge Álvarez Máynez, a former congressman and candidate of the leftist Citizens' Movement (MC), is polling at a distant third place. Polls suggest he struggles with name recognition, but his advocacy of the legalization of certain drugs and viral social media campaign has resonated with Mexico's youth.

**Figure 1. Aggregated Polling on Mexico's Presidential Race**



**Source:** CRS, using data from Oraculus, Elección Presidencial 2024, <https://oraculus.mx/presidente2024/>, accessed May 6, 2024.

**Notes:** Percentage totals do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Implications for U.S. Policy and Congress

Congress may monitor Mexico's June 2024 presidential electoral process, the president-elect's positions, and the size of the president-elect's support base in the Mexican congress, all of which are likely to shape the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship. Congress also may consider strengthening direct ties with the new Mexican congress through bilateral fora, such as the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group, created through H.J.Res 283 in 1960.

Presidential candidates Sheinbaum and Gálvez have expressed willingness to work with the next U.S. Administration on efforts to manage irregular migration, even as they have staked out their own positions on the issue. Sheinbaum has [advocated](#) for greater economic investment in countries of origin, whereas Gálvez has indicated she would [seek](#) more U.S. funding to help Mexico support migrants transiting through its territory. It is unclear whether either candidate would be willing to cooperate with a resumption of U.S. policies such as the [Migrant Protection Protocols](#) that seek to transfer foreign nationals seeking asylum in the United States to Mexico.

The Mexican election also may affect bilateral collaboration on security and commercial matters. After years of [tensions](#) on counterdrug efforts under the outgoing administration, Gálvez has [advocated](#) for enhanced cooperation with the United States to combat the trafficking of arms, people, and drugs, including fentanyl. It is unclear how Sheinbaum, who has [suggested](#) fentanyl is primarily a public health issue, would approach U.S.-Mexico counternarcotics cooperation. With regard to commercial cooperation, Sheinbaum supports Mexico's current state-led approach to energy development, whereas Gálvez [would welcome](#) private investment in Mexico's energy sector. Some Members of Congress have [urged](#) the Biden Administration to address Mexico's energy policies, which they argue are discriminatory and undermine the USMCA.

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