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**Polls**

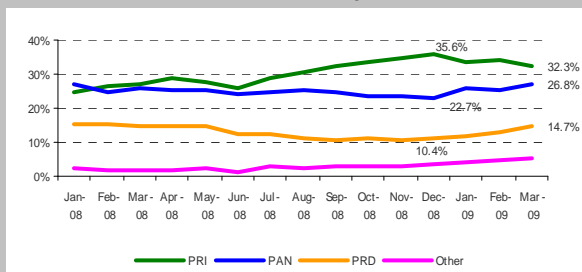
**PRI lead shrinks again**

A new [Mitofsky national survey](#) confirms the continued shrinkage in the PRI's lead in the July congressional elections. Their advantage over the PAN shrank to 5.5%, compared to 8.9% in February and 12.9% in December. More than one in five respondents (20.9%) are still undecided.

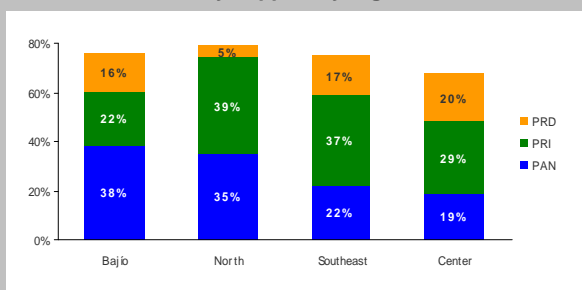
The PRI still has the advantage in terms of committed supporters, who say their mind is made up, but the majority of support for all three major parties is "soft." One third of respondents consider themselves independent.

The survey also highlights the differences in regional support. The PAN is strongest and the PRI weakest in the Bajío region. The north is basically split between the PAN and PRI with the PRD not a factor. The PAN is weakest in the southeast and center (where it runs third). Only the PRI has a clear nationwide base. See [our blog](#) for more survey results.

Preference for Federal Deputies 2008-09



Party support by region



**Key Dates**

- 4/30:** End of regular Congressional session
- 4/29-5/2:** Deadline for registering candidates for Chamber of Deputies
- 5/5:** Start of federal election campaigns
- 7/5:** National congressional, 6 gubernatorial, and 5 other local elections.

**Government knew about flu more than 10 days before acting**

The government knew the dimensions of the crisis as early as April 13, according to the *Templo Mayor* column, but didn't want do anything that would disrupt the visit of **Barack Obama** three days later. A new report states that a U.S. 'bio-vigilance' company [Veratect](#) informed the World Health Organization on April 2 that 60% of the 3,000 inhabitants of La Gloria, Veracruz had been stricken with flu or pneumonia. ([Reforma 4/25](#), [4/26](#), [NY Times 4/26](#))

**Extraordinary powers invoked to combat epidemic**

President **Felipe Calderón** declared a national emergency to combat the [H1N1 swine flu](#) epidemic. The flu continues to spread, with at least 16 Mexican states ([see map](#)) reporting cases. As of Sunday night, there were 103 confirmed deaths, and 1,614 persons hospitalizations, with about two-thirds released after treatment. Health authorities were given the power to enter homes to check for illness and to order quarantines. All public events in the capital were cancelled: two major soccer games and Sunday Mass were celebrated before television cameras. Schools are closed until May 6. (Special coverage sections: [Universal](#), [Reforma](#))

**Piedras Negras police chief gunned down**

Retired Army Colonel **Arturo Navarro López**, who was appointed chief of police of the border city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila just 16 days ago, was gunned down at dawn outside his home; at least 40 bullets hit his vehicle. Navarro, who had been part of the Presidential Guard, had been facing a wildcat strike by officers because of the new standards that were being put in place; 30 officers had been fired since April 7<sup>th</sup>. The Army and Federal Preventive Police took control of the city, and were reported to be holding most of the city's police officers at police headquarters. ([Reforma 4/25](#), [Universal 4/25](#))

**New security package sent to Congress**

With only three scheduled sessions left until the end of the Congressional term on April 30, President Calderón sent a package of security measures including amendments to the national security, organized crime, firearms, and the military code of justice laws. The proposed legislation redefines national security to include domestic security, and makes possible the "declaration of an affectation of domestic security" that would give the Army greater authority to operate domestically, and also gives the Federal Police power to carry out wiretaps. The proposals also increase prison terms possession of illegal munitions such as armor piercing bullets and for soldiers who desert to join the cartels. Noted the *Templo Mayor* column: "By sending the [security package] to Congress at a quarter 'til midnight, the President makes it clear that security is priority for his government ... but as an electoral issue." ([Reforma 4/23](#), [4/24](#))

**Gordillo marks 20 years on top; praises Calderón**

**Elba Esther Gordillo** celebrated 20 years as head of the Teachers' Union (SNTE). During the kickoff for the annual conference for teacher evaluation, she said: "Mr. President [Calderón], without blushing, without doubt, without complexes we say to you that we are your allies, that we are moving forward with the Alliance for Quality Education." She also had her first meeting with new Education Secretary **Alonso Lujambio**, the ninth Secretary she has seen during her tenure. ([Universal 4/24](#))