

## Showdown at Brazil's Congress: The Weaponless Vs. the Self-Defense Front

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On October 23 more than 120 million registered voters in Brazil will go to the polls, not to vote for candidates, as they normally do on election dates, but to decide whether firearms should continue to be sold in Brazil.

The referendum is dividing opinions among members of the Brazilian Congress and society, even though a competition for legislative seats is not involved.

Next week, two groups of Federal Deputies and Senators plan to begin campaigning in favor or against weapons and munition sales in the country. Voters will have to answer this question "Arms and munition sales should be banned in Brazil?"

The Deputies and Senators are split between the Parliamentary Front for a Weaponless Brazil, which wants an end to arms sales, and the Parliamentary Self-Defense Front, which wants sales to continue.

The two fronts were officially signed up by the Leadership Commission of the National Congress with the Federal Elections Board (TSE). Just as in the case of ordinary elections, the rules for the referendum will be decided by the TSE.

According to the official regulations, the two parliamentary fronts will have equal time to transmit their messages on radios and TVs.

Nevertheless, the TSE hasn't decided yet the formats and time periods for the campaigns for and against weapons' sales, due to the Congress's delay in approving the legislative bill authorizing the referendum.

The bill was finally approved by the Congress early in July, after nearly a year under Congressional scrutiny.

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