

## In Effort to Regain Popular Trust, Brazil Congress Expells One of Their Own

Contributed by Iolando Lourenço  
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By a vote of 313 to 156, with 13 abstentions and five blank votes, deputy Roberto Jefferson (from the PTB party of Rio de Janeiro), was expelled from the Brazilian Congress last night.

Pursuant to Brazilian legislation, he will not be able to run for office again until 2015.

The expulsion of Jefferson occurred exactly 98 days after a motion for his expulsion was brought before the Ethics Council. The motion came from the PL (Liberal Party) after Jefferson denounced a payoff scheme in Congress in which some members of parties allied with the government (such as the PL) were receiving monthly payments to ensure that they voted with the government.

Jefferson also confessed to receiving US\$ 1.7 million (4 million reais) from the ruling Workers Party (PT) for 2002 election expenses. That is an electoral crime.

With 257 votes needed to expel, the motion got 313 votes. Besides losing his seat in Congress, Jefferson will not be able to run for office again until 2015.

According to Jairo Carneiro, redactor of the expulsion process, the ousting of Jefferson is the first step in renewing congressional prestige and popular trust in the body. "This decision came at a crucial moment in the history of the Brazilian legislative branch of government," he said.

However, the leader of the PTB, Jose Múcio said, "This is a loss for Congress and the country. The public did not want Jefferson expelled," he said.

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