

FEBRUARY 2, 2026

# COSTA RICA

## 2026 PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS POST-ELECTION REPORT



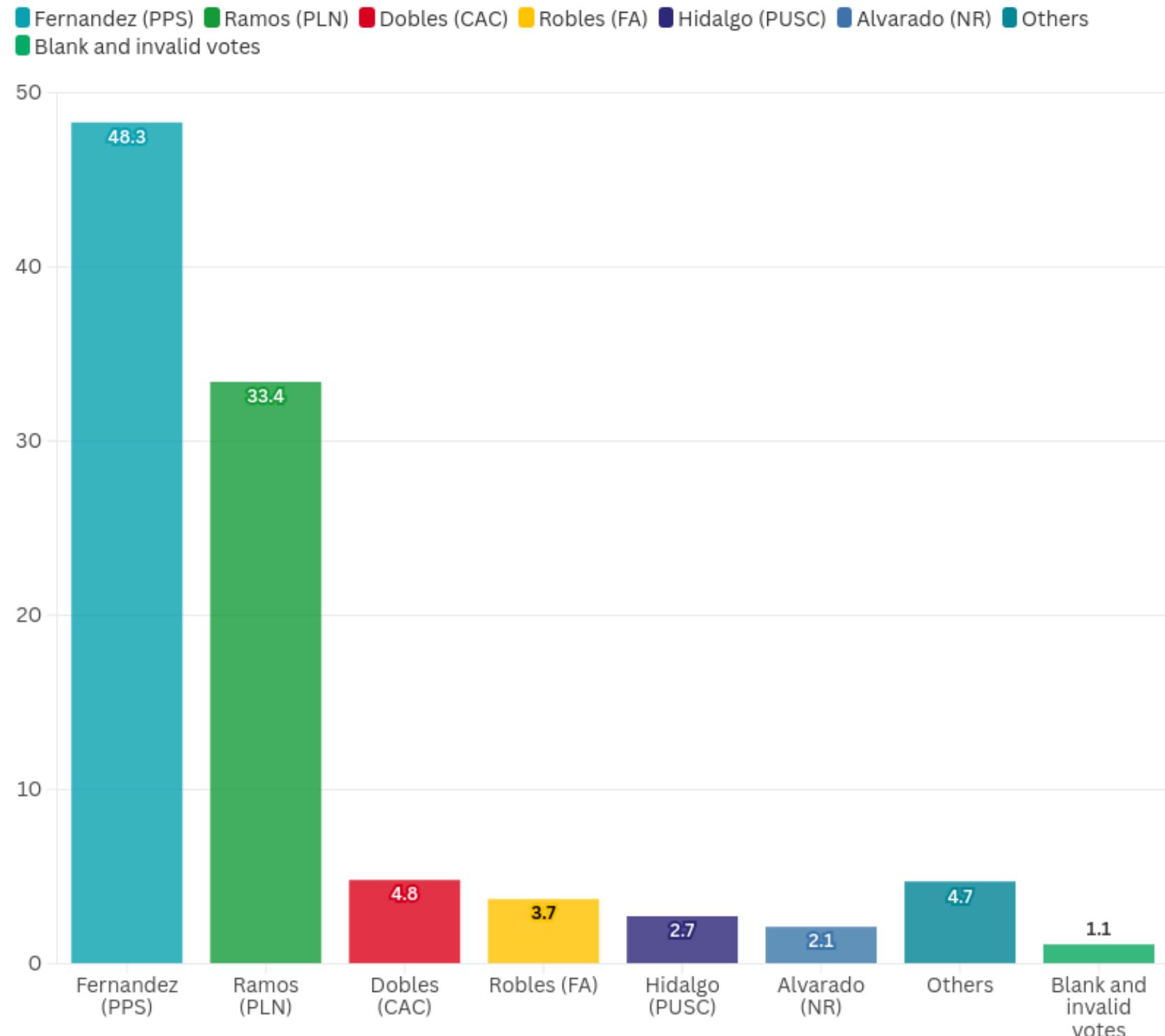
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# THE ELECTION AT A GLANCE

- Costa Rica held general elections this Sunday to choose the **next President, two Vice Presidents, and all 57 seats in the Legislative Assembly**. With 96.18% of votes counted, **Laura Fernández Delgado**—the ruling party's candidate from the **Partido Pueblo Soberano**—won **48.3%** of the vote, securing a first-round victory. The ruling party also won an outright majority in the Legislative Assembly, **taking 31 of 57 seats**. The new Congress will be sworn in on **May 1**, and the presidential inauguration is scheduled for **May 8**.
- Álvaro Ramos, the candidate of Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN, in Spanish), finished second with 33.4%, drawing a substantial share of previously undecided voters. Still, because Fernández cleared the 40% threshold, a runoff was not triggered. All other candidates remained below 5%.
- In her victory speech, Fernández called for building a **“Third Republic”** and described the country’s transformation as **“deep and irreversible.”** The “Second Republic” refers to the political era that began after the 1948 civil war. Looking ahead, Fernández said her administration will revisit the role of the opposition, political parties, and the press. The result also consolidates the direction set under President Rodrigo Chaves, giving the government stronger political and institutional capacity to move its agenda forward. In this context, the next period is likely to feature a push for **greater market liberalization, a harder line on crime and institutional political reforms**.
- **Voter turnout reached 69.10%**, marking a return to typical participation levels after the historically low figures observed in recent elections. The electoral process unfolded in a climate of calm and democratic celebration. National and international electoral observers, including the Organization of American States (OAS), highlighted the orderly conduct of the elections. For her part, the President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Eugenia Zamora Chavarría, called for overcoming differences that emerged during the electoral process, promoting reconciliation, and renewing the country’s democratic commitment.

# ELECTION RESULTS



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE).

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The ruling party's candidate, Laura Fernández (Partido Pueblo Soberano – PPS, in Spanish), held onto her pre-election support and captured a significant share of undecided voters, finishing with 48.3%—enough to secure a first-round victory.

Álvaro Ramos (Partido Liberación Nacional – PLN, in Spanish) obtained 33.4%, while Claudia Dobles (Coalición Agenda Ciudadana – CAC, in Spanish) largely matched her previous polling levels, reaching 4.8%, without managing to attract a substantial portion of undecided voters.

Public security emerged as the central issue of the campaign, dominating the presidential debates and becoming the main argument of opposition candidates. Even so, the record of recent administrations led by the PLN and the PAC, together with corruption cases associated with their time in office, appears to be a key factor in explaining the ruling party's victory.

Overall, the result confirms the consolidation of a new phase in Costa Rican politics that began with Rodrigo Chaves' rise to power. It reflects the strengthening of a political project that emerged outside the traditional party system, reshaped the political landscape, and points to a broader reconfiguration of party politics in Costa Rica.

# PRESIDENT-ELECT

## Laura Fernández

Partido Pueblo Soberano (PPS)



Fernández holds a Master's degree in Political Science. She previously served as Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy (2022-2025) and as Minister of the Presidency (2023-2025), where she acted as Chief of Staff and liaison with the Legislative Assembly. She resigned to run in the presidential race and presents herself as the continuity candidate of President Rodrigo Chaves' political project.

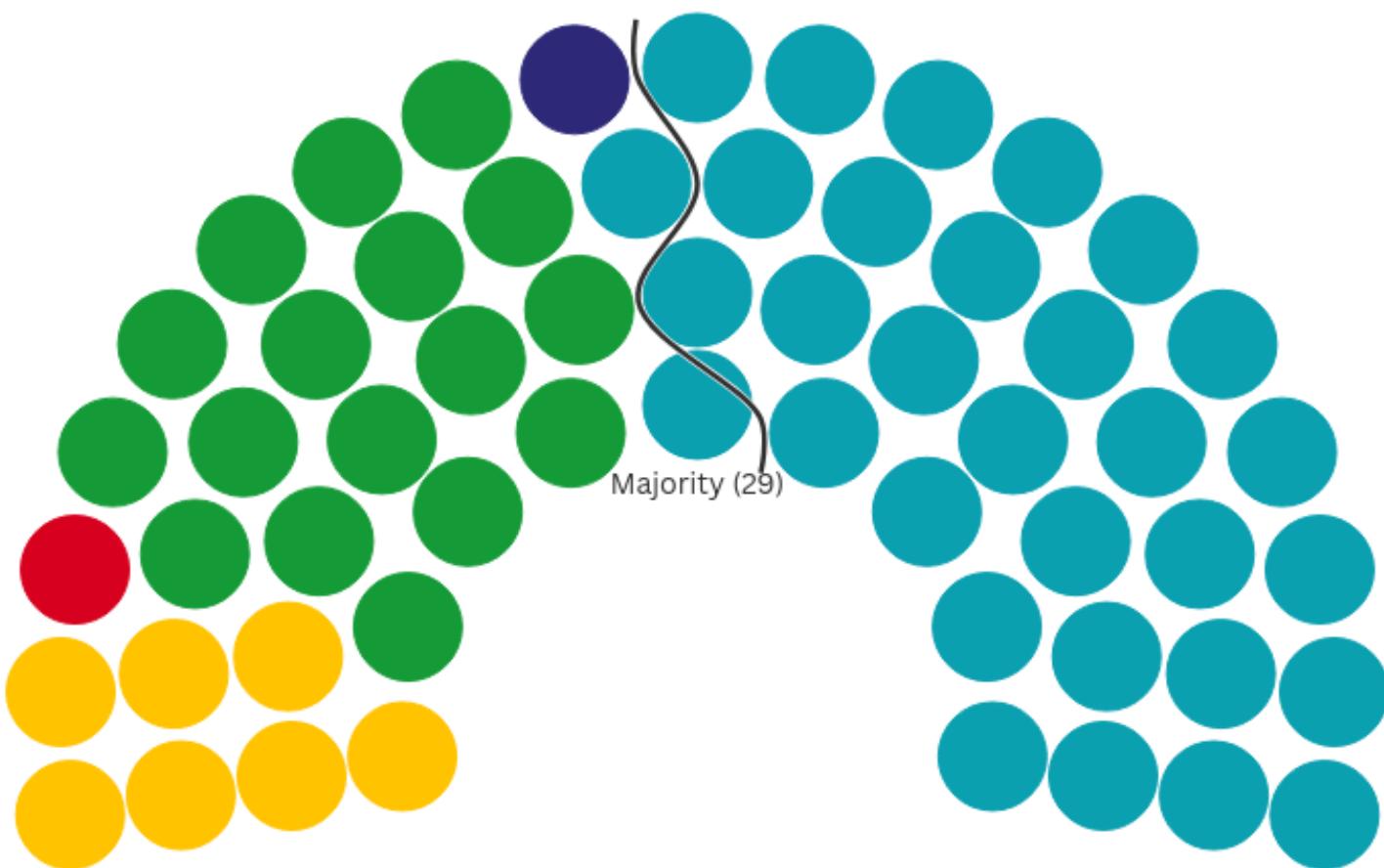
### Key policy priorities include:

- Advancing the “Costa Rica Fintech” strategy, promoting financial inclusion and the development of new banking products. This also includes moving forward with port infrastructure modernization and providing state support to productive sectors as part of a broader trade-opening agenda.
- Expanding the use of electronic payments in public transportation, particularly in rural areas. Streamlining tax and customs procedures through the Digital Treasury initiative, and promoting a Cybersecurity Law that includes digital crimes and establishes a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence.
- Promoting lower drug prices and improved access to medicines through greater use of generics, prescriptions by active ingredient, parallel imports, faster regulatory approvals, and stronger market oversight. Creating a National Competition Policy, reducing regulatory barriers, promoting simpler legal structures for business registration, and improving the country's use of free trade agreements.
- Pushing for the modernization of labor legislation (including approval of the 4x3 workweek scheme) and introducing incentives for hiring unemployed individuals over 40 and people with disabilities, through private-sector incentives.

# THE NEW LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE (2026–2030)

The Partido Pueblo Soberano (PPS, in Spanish) has emerged as the dominant force in the Legislative Assembly, signaling a break from years of fragmentation and weak consensus-building. Although the ruling party has the numbers to pass legislation on its own, the opposition still holds a critical lever: the quorum. Since 38 lawmakers are needed to convene, the seats missing for the PPS to reach that number could become the opposition's main source of leverage—and the government's biggest obstacle to advancing its agenda.

## Legislative Assembly 2026–2030



● Partido Frente Amplio (7) ● Coalición Agenda Ciudadana (1) ● Partido Liberación Nacional (17)  
● Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (1) ● Partido Pueblo Soberano (31)

Source: Own elaboration.

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**The PPS secured 31 seats.** This allows the ruling party to surpass the absolute majority of 29 seats required to pass legislation. The result makes the PPS the largest governing bloc the Assembly has seen since the 1982–1986 period.

**The quorum factor.** The Legislative Assembly requires the presence of two-thirds of its members to hold sessions, which forces the ruling party to build agreements beyond its absolute majority. Among its potential allies is the Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (PUSC), which secured one seat. However, this support alone will not be sufficient, making negotiations with other blocs necessary. The ability to deny or break quorum will thus become one of the opposition's main tools to constrain the government.

**The role of the opposition.** The main counterweight to the government will come from the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN), with 17 seats, and the Partido Frente Amplio, which will hold 7 seats. These center-left and left-wing forces will have the capacity to shape, delay, or block executive initiatives, particularly by conditioning the quorum required to hold a plenary sitting. In his first post-election statements, Álvaro Ramos (PLN) said he would maintain a stance of dialogue and cooperation “whenever it is in the country’s best interest.”

**The transition.** The new Legislative Assembly will take office on May 1. Until then, the ruling party will remain in the minority, opening a window of opportunity for the opposition to push its own agenda and seek approval for key initiatives during the transition period.

# THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES

Laura Fernández previously served as Minister of National Planning and as Minister of the Presidency under the current administration of Rodrigo Chaves. Throughout the campaign, she presented herself as the continuity candidate of the ruling political project, positioning herself as the political heir to the outgoing president.



On labor policy, the new government is **prioritizing the Exceptional Work Schedules Bill**. The bill centers on a 4x3 schedule—four days on, three days off—and would permit shifts of up to 12 hours in sectors that operate around the clock, provided the work is not considered heavy, dangerous, or unhealthy. It also sets out safeguards on voluntary participation, workplace health, adequate rest, non-discrimination, and work-life balance.

On the political side, the administration is pushing for a **redefinition of the role of the opposition and the functioning of political parties**, a move that could trigger deeper institutional reforms. Among the scenarios under consideration are constitutional amendments to allow for presidential re-election or to broaden executive powers, which are currently restricted in its ability to govern by decree. Meanwhile, the campaign's critical stance toward the media may translate into frictions around press freedom and journalistic practice.



**Security** has become one of Costa Rica's fastest-growing concerns and is expected to sit at the heart of the next administration's agenda. Construction is already underway on a maximum-security prison modeled after El Salvador's approach. One of the most contentious proposals currently on the table is to advance legislation in the Legislative Assembly that would temporarily curb—or suspend—certain constitutional guarantees, with the stated goal of making it easier to capture contract killers and drug traffickers operating in high-violence areas, according to police intelligence. The push carries added weight in a country that—unlike much of Latin America—has no standing army.

# THANKS!

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