

Chile nixes Facebook, Twitter campaign bans after outcry

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Chile backpedaled on a decision to ban election campaigning on social media after the ruling united politicians from both left and right in outcry.

With candidates gearing up for local elections on October 23, the Chilean Electoral Service (Servel) issued a manual on the country's new electoral [law](#) that included blanket bans on campaigning via Facebook,

Twitter, WhatsApp or newspaper websites.

But politicians of all stripes united in outcry.

"Servel has overstepped its limits. Its interpretation of the law is absurd. It's a serious mistake. The legislation we approved did not in any way limit campaigning via the internet," lawmaker Leonardo Soto of the ruling Socialist Party said on Wednesday.

"There's been a misinterpretation," said Cristian Monckeberg, a lawmaker for right-wing party National Renewal.

Hours later, the electoral authorities changed their minds. Upon further reflection, posting on social networks is private speech, not "electoral propaganda," they said.

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Chile's new electoral law, passed last year, replaced ones dating back to the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1998).

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