

ENGLISH EDITION

Milei Isolated Amid Narco Scandal: Opposition Overrides Vetoes to Pass University Funding and Pediatric Emergency Laws

El Ciudadano · 3 de octubre de 2025

The Senate overturned presidential vetoes on the pediatric emergency and university funding laws, leaving the “libertarian” government constitutionally obligated to promulgate them.



Amid the political turmoil over the [narco scandal](#) centering on José Luis Espert, the top candidate for La Libertad Avanza (LLA) in Buenos Aires province ahead of the October 26 parliamentary elections, Argentina's President Javier Milei suffered another setback in Congress, where his minority bloc once again lacked the votes—and the leverage—to prevail.

The first blow came with a second rejection of the presidential veto of the University Funding Law. The measure, which guarantees inflation-updated operating budgets across the system and restores pay for teaching and non-teaching staff, was reaffirmed in the Senate with an overwhelming 58 votes in favor, 7 against, and 4 abstentions—comfortably surpassing the two-thirds threshold.

Minutes later, the chamber hit the self-styled “libertarian” government again by reasserting the law declaring a Pediatric Emergency, which includes specific protections for the Garrahan Hospital. That bill passed with 59 votes in favor, 7 against, and 3 abstentions.

Both initiatives became law automatically, and the Executive is constitutionally obligated to promulgate them.

Isolation as the “libertarian” brand

The roll call laid bare LLA’s parliamentary fragility. Once again, the ruling party was virtually alone. Beyond its five senators present, only two outside allies dared vote against the national universities and the Garrahan Hospital: Córdoba’s Bullrich-aligned Carmen Álvarez Rivero and Formosa’s Francisco Paoltroni, *Página/12* reported.

The abstentions, in turn, exposed the limits of former president Mauricio Macri’s rapprochement with Milei. Three senators from the now-defunct Juntos por el Cambio—Alfredo de Angeli, Martín Goerling and Victoria Huala—abstained in both votes, a gesture that “seems to bear the stamp” of the PRO leader. Radical senator Carolina Losada also abstained on the university funding bill—“a move more aligned with libertarianism than with her party’s tradition,” the Argentine outlet noted.

The inconsistency of “there’s no money”

During the debate, the government’s rationale for the vetoes—centered on the alleged lack of funds—was dismantled point by point by the opposition, which highlighted the administration’s conflicting priorities.

Unión por la Patria senator Wado de Pedro laid bare the real squeeze on university budgets: “The president sent a budget of 4.9 trillion pesos,” he said, explaining that “rectors calculate operating costs at 7.3 trillion.” In a pointed jab referencing

the turmoil surrounding libertarian candidate [José Luis Espert](#)—linked to Federico “Fred” Machado, a businessman facing a U.S. extradition request on drug trafficking and fraud charges, from whom he allegedly received a \$200,000 transfer via a trust—De Pedro stressed that the revenue the government will forgo through tax exemptions for seven grain exporters—about \$1.5 billion—equals “the same figure that would have given peace of mind to more than two million Argentines who study, want to train, and are not in the narco world, unlike some candidates.”

In the same vein, Radical senator Martín Lousteau skewered the official narrative: “The \$1.7 billion the government spent in three days to try to get dollars from the grain companies pays 12 years of Garrahan’s budget. In three days they spent 12 years of Garrahan’s budget. But there’s no money,” he quipped, according to *Página/12*.

PRO senator Guadalupe Tagliaferri, for her part, argued that the libertarian administration’s “there’s no money” mantra “was an excuse, not a priority.”

“We can see it was a matter of priorities, because the money appeared. Not for retirees or for families of people with disabilities. It appeared because of an election result—the Buenos Aires province vote—and concern about the national election,” she underscored.

Milei at odds with the law and the separation of powers

The day also deepened the institutional conflict that Milei sparked by systematically failing to implement laws enacted by Congress. Treasury Secretary Carlos Guberman revealed on Wednesday that the government “will not implement laws that entail new expenditures,” a stance that, according to specialists, exceeds the Executive’s authority.

On that point, deputy Lousteau highlighted the inconsistency, noting that Milei's own Juvenile Criminal Regime bill sent to Congress "empowers the Chief of Cabinet to reassign funds for its implementation, just as the Disability Emergency does."

It is worth recalling that although that measure was promulgated by the Executive, it was suspended under the same argument of lacking funding—a maneuver the Senate also rejected this Wednesday by approving, with 54 votes, Lousteau's motion to annul decree 681/25 that had promulgated it.

"We are going to support this motion brought by Senator Lousteau, which is actually toned down because what would be appropriate is a censure of the Chief of Cabinet," said Unión por la Patria caucus leader José Mayans, in a clear criticism of the government for failing to respect the separation of powers.

X-ray of a government that "pays the price of its isolation"

Faced with the strength of the opposition's arguments, the government's defense was minimal. Only two voices spoke up: Ezequiel Atauche and Córdoba's Carmen Álvarez Rivero. The Jujuy senator, without addressing the funding, accused Kirchnerism of instrumentalizing institutions: "We don't want universities to be engines of political financing," he said, accusing those defending the Pediatric Emergency of "using children for political ends."

According to [Página/12](#), these defeats are not isolated episodes but "an X-ray of a government that chose to blow up bridges and is now paying the cost of its solitude," and whose failures "owe more to its own political malpractice toward those who tried to collaborate than to the supposed 'coup-plotting' Milei attributes to Peronism." They are also "a worrying signal for the tutors up north," a reference to the U.S. government, which is demanding greater political solidity from the "libertarian" before unlocking another financial rescue.

That demand for governability arrives at the worst moment, as Milei must advance the 2026 Budget with José Luis Espert—the head of the Budget and Finance Committee—battered by the "narco scandal."

Fuente: [El Ciudadano](#)