

Brazilian president's Economic Freedom Act includes repressive labor reform



Brasilia, September 22 (RHC)-- Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has sanctioned the Economic Freedom Act (MPLE), mostly known as "the mini-labor reform" -- a proposal whose main objective is to facilitate investments by reducing the regulations employers must comply with.

"We want to give people more encouragement, confidence and legal security to start a business," the far-right politician said and explained that his regulations would allow entrepreneurs to "continue with their lives normally" in case their businesses fail.

On behalf of supposedly creating 3.7 million new jobs over the next decade, Bolsonaro's law allows mechanisms to increase workloads without adequate monetary compensations. In that sense, for example, companies having less than 20 workers will no longer be required to keep records of their employees' entry time and departure time.

New regulations also "free" companies from the obligation to register working hours which are carried out on unusual days, such as weekends or holidays. In practical terms, all these changes will mean that employers can extend the workday outside the current legal limits.

"This proposal will greatly help our economy," former capitan Bolsonaro said, referring to a law which will allow entrepreneurs to increase their profitability levels by making labor standards more flexible.

In April, the Brazilian executive sent a bill to secure free markets and restrict public participation in the economy. After introducing some minor modifications to the original text, Brazilian lawmakers approved his bill on August.

Other measures favored by the MPLE regulations are the exemption of licenses for "low risk" businesses such as startups and repeal of some requirements related to occupational safety and health.

Bolsonaro's law also allows companies to be created with a single partner and without the traditional "minimum capital" requirement. "The Act is meant to facilitate workers' exploitation. Initially, the bill even authorized working hours on Sundays; however, the Senate eliminated such proposal due to its unpopularity," local outlet Causa Operaria recalled.

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