

# *Argentina's Senate passes 'millionaire's tax' for COVID-19 relief*

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The one-time levy will apply to Argentina's richest citizens and fund medical supplies and aid for businesses. (Photo: Getty Images)

Buenos Aires, December 6 (RHC)-- Argentina's Senate has approved a wealth tax to help the government fund COVID-19 measures, including purchasing health supplies and offering economic relief to struggling businesses. The one-time levy, passed with 42 votes in favor and 26 against, will apply to

about 12,000 of the country's richest citizens.

President Alberto Fernandez has said he hopes the measure – also dubbed a “millionaire’s tax” – would help Argentina raise about \$3.7bn amid a years-long economic downturn worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is a unique, one-time contribution,” said Senator Carlos Caserio, a member of the committee responsible for the bill, according to a statement on the Senate’s website, Bloomberg reported on Saturday.

“We’re coming out of this pandemic like countries come out of world wars, with thousands of dead and devastated economies,” Caserio said.

Argentina has reported more than 1.45 million cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, according to Johns Hopkins University’s tally, as well as more than 39,500 deaths linked to the virus.

The law applies a tax of at least 2 percent on people with more than \$2.45 million in assets, Reuters reported. The funds will be allocated to buy medical equipment and supplies, aid small and medium-sized businesses, support students and social programmes, and fund natural gas projects.

“The #AporteSolidario is extraordinary because the circumstances are extraordinary,” governing party Senator Anabel Fernandez Sagasti wrote on Twitter. “We must find points of connection between those who have the most to contribute and those who are in need.”

The measure, which earlier passed in the country’s lower Chamber of Deputies, drew criticism from Argentina’s more conservative opposition legislators.

Daniel Pelegrina, president of the Argentine Rural Society, warned that proponents of the legislation want “to present it as a contribution of the richest, but we know what happens with all those unique taxes – they stay forever”.

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