

# *Peruvians Hold Vigil in Support of Same-Sex Civil Unions*

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Lima, March 3 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Hundreds of people participated in a vigil in the Peruvian capital of Lima Monday night to support legislation that would allow civil marriage between people of the same sex.

Participants gathered to hear speeches by legislators Veronika Mendoza and Carlos Bruce, and watch inspirational videos in support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights.

Jose Bernaola and Fernando Alemand were among those who participated in the demonstration. They have been in a committed relationship for years and now that they are in their 30's, they want to formalize their relationship and see the possibility of a civil union as important for both practical and emotional reasons.

Congress is also considering an alternative legislation titled Solidarity Unions, which LGBT groups have criticized as too limited.

"We want equal rights and Solidarity Union does not recognize that me and my female partner are a family, for example," said vigil organizer, Pilar Rojas from the Civil Union Now collective. "It doesn't recognize that we have a relationship with feelings, nor the basis that we want to build our life together, and that is what thousands of families want."

The Commission on Justice and Human Rights of Congress will be considering both proposals on March 10, but have decided to vote on the motions without a debate. Supporters of Civil Unions want the issue to be sent to a general vote in Congress after an open debate.

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