



Published: 03.31.2007

## Mexican lawmakers propose increasing penalties for abortion amid competing attempts to legalize

*THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

MEXICO CITY — Lawmakers with Mexico's small Green Party have sent a bill to the Senate that seeks to toughen penalties for illegal abortions, a bid to counteract efforts by leftist legislators to legalize abortion, a senator said Friday.

Green Party Sen. Arturo Escobar said the bill, introduced Thursday, proposes increasing prison sentences — currently between six months to one year — to one to three years for women who have an abortion.

Escobar said the bill also asks that anyone who forces a woman to abort against her will be sentenced to from eight to 10 years in prison, instead of the current six to eight years.

Escobar said the measure is aimed at challenging a bill filed Tuesday in the lower house by the Democratic Revolution Party, or PRD, to legalize abortion nationwide.

"Mexican society is only prepared to allow abortion when the pregnancy is the result of rape, when the fetus has congenital defects or when the life of the woman is at risk," Escobar said.

The bill to legalize abortion nationwide is expected to face a tough test in Congress, where President Felipe Calderon's conservative National Action Party is the biggest force.

However, an initiative presented by PRD lawmakers in Mexico City to allow abortion during the first three months of pregnancy is expected to be approved in April by the city's legislature, where the PRD holds a majority.

The abortion bills have launched a protracted fight between liberal lawmakers and conservative forces in a nation where about 90 percent of people are at least nominally Catholic.

All content copyright © 1999-2006 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.