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Mexican Court Upholds Fox's Budget Veto

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MEXICO CITY -- Mexico's Supreme Court backed President Vicente Fox Thursday in his dispute with opposition lawmakers over changes they made to the 2005 budget, but the ruling won't necessarily apply to future budgets.

The court voted 6-5 in favor of the executive branch, which is seeking to reverse some of the changes made to this year's \$150 billion budget. Justice Sergio Valls said the decision doesn't set a precedent for future budget disputes.

In discussing the budget last year, opposition legislators added money for states, roads, health and education, among others, and cut funds to government ministries, prompting the executive branch to charge that the budget was unworkable.

In December, Fox signed the budget with reservations, and asked the Supreme Court to rule on whether the budget should be considered a spending order that the executive branch must carry out, as the lower house of Congress asserted, or whether it's an authorization for the executive branch to spend money in accordance with its own proposals.

In a statement Thursday night, Fox's office called the ruling "of transcendental importance for the straightening of the principle of collaboration between the powers" of government.

The court's decision does not undermine Congressional responsibility, but instead will help the legislative and executive branches reach an agreement ensuring "the optimum use of public resources," the statement said.

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