

Bachelet's First Educational Bill Generates Controversy in Chile



Santiago de Chile, May 7 (NNN-RHC) -- The creation of an administrator position for private universities that present irregularities or financial problems has been happily welcomed by student leaders and professors, but rejected by the opposition.

President Michelle Bachelet signed her government's first bill regarding education yesterday, creating the position of a provisional administrator for universities in crisis.

"Today is a special day; we are signing the first of our educational projects. Education should be a right and not a commodity. If we want to be a modern and developed country, education should be guaranteed," she said.

The initiative vests great power in the administrator, who will take on the academic, managerial and financial control of the center during the mandate.

Naschla Aburman, president of the Catholic University's Students Federation, commended the measure and said it was "extremely necessary and urgent in order to

provide a response to those who are victims of the educational crisis". However, she said, the measure must still be approved by the Congress.

Chilean media have said that the first administrator will be appointed for Universidad de Mar, which is being closed due to administrative irregularities, leaving 18,000 students without classes.

Meanwhile, Melissa Sepúlveda, Student President at the University of Chile, said the appointment of an administrators is no guarantee since laws are constantly being violated in the country.

Opposition deputy, José Hoffmann, criticized the measure and described it as a "patch", since it does not solve the real problem.

Legislator Felipe Kast also voiced his discomfort, arguing that the measure lacks clear regulations.

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