

# *Colombians mobilize in support of President Gustavo Petro*

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Bogota, July 20 (RHC)-- The Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) of Colombia called for a new march this Thursday in support of the government of President Gustavo Petro, when Independence Day is commemorated.

Affiliated unions of the CUT will participate in the demonstration, as well as those that make up the Colombian Federation of Educators (Fecode). Likewise, the Unitary Departmental Command (CUT) of the department of Bolivar announced that it would join the mobilization.

The concentration will take place at Plaza Bolivar, in Bogota (capital), where the workers' support to the labor, pension and health reforms to be presented by the Government before Congress during the second semester of this year will be ratified.

Previously, the president of the CUT, Fabio Arias, stated that the central will support the Government of change, "all its progressive social reforms, which attends the clamor and vindication of workers and many sectors of the population, most especially with the health reform, labor and pension reform."

"We are summoning the citizens in general and the population, the ordinary people and in particular the workers to be present, in all the regions, the streets, and public squares to support the social reforms", he

added.

Regarding the legislative period that begins this Thursday, Fecode considered that the Congress "will have to make crucial decisions that will determine whether to pave the way for the main reforms promoted by the Government or whether to impose new barriers that would maintain the status quo, as the big economic unions want."

Similarly, the teachers' federation added that it will also mobilize to express its rejection of the "school vouchers" project, which, according to the organization, promotes the commercialization of public education and the privatization of teaching.

This is a bill presented to Congress by Senator Paloma Valencia, of the Democratic Center (party of former President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, 2002-2010), which promotes that children in vulnerable situations enter private schools and their studies are paid for by the Colombian State.

Valencia alleged that the private education system has a higher educational quality than the public one and that, by enrolling in the latter, minors would be condemned to a poor education, instead of supporting the Government's decision to allocate a larger budget to education and to create better working conditions for the members of the school community.

Regarding this proposal, Fecode underlined that "it constitutes a new attempt by the Creole right wing to hand over the public education budget to private individuals, revive clientelism and business at the cost of destroying the public education system and reversing its secular and democratic character".

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