

# **Tribunal Rules That Arias can Tout CAFTA on Tours**

By Gillian Gillers  
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In a long-awaited decision, the Supreme Elections Tribunal said yesterday that President Oscar Arias has not violated electoral rules by touting the Central American Free-Trade Agreement with the United States (CAFTA) at nearly every official event he attends.

Tribunal President Luis Antonio Sobrado said the President's activities are not “propagandistic” and thus do not violate rules against using public resources to promote CAFTA. “Propaganda” would include distributing pro-CAFTA pins or flyers, according to a statement from the Tribunal.

The resolution – which responded to petitions by the Access without Exclusion Party, the National Rescue Party and activist Alberto Cabezas – also said the Tribunal has no power to sanction Arias or Public Health Minister María Luisa Ávila, for invoking religion during speeches on CAFTA. Still, the Tribunal “vehemently urged” them to avoid making any religious references when touting the treaty.