

ELECTION OFFICIAL NEWS

Military and Overseas Voting

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 10

NOVEMBER 2008

CEO Delegation Visit Troops in the War Zone

A delegation of Secretaries of State from five states, invited by the Secretary of Defense, visited the troops in Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Germany. The delegation consisted of Secretary Debra Bowen of California, Secretary Kurt Browning of Florida, Secretary Pedro Cortes of Pennsylvania (also President of the National Association of Secretaries of State, NASS), Secretary Todd Rokita of Indiana (immediate Past President of NASS), and Secretary Delbert Hosemann of Mississippi.

These Secretaries are Chief Election Officials of their states and also, via their positions in national election organizations, represent election officials in all the states. The delegation members visited the combat zones to promote voting participation and to learn about the voting assistance programs and service members' voting experiences.

At each of the eight installations visited, the delegation met with the Installation Commander and the Installation Voting Assistance Officer. They received an in-depth briefing of the Installation's voting assistance program and the processes and procedures provided to the service members. They also held question and answer sessions. The delegation also met with the troops both individually and in panel discussions to learn about service members' absentee voting experience.

In addition, the delegation was briefed by Military Postal Service Agency personnel at Arifjan, Bagram, and Balad, and learned about the ballot mailing process at each stop. The delegation visited the military hospital in Balad Air Base, Afghanistan and later visited Landstuhl Army Medical Center in Germany. Throughout their visit, the delegation continuously stressed to the

service members the importance of voting and having their voices heard.

The Secretaries expressed their appreciation of the Department of Defense and Federal Voting Assistance Program for providing them the opportunity to learn and experience so much in such a short time. The Secretaries said they were impressed with how the voting assistance officers made sure all service members were knowledgeable of their states' voting procedures and requirements. The Secretaries expressed their eagerness to work with their state officials, including state legislators, to encourage improvements to the absentee voting process, especially by adding alternatives to the by-mail process, such as emailing and use of the internet.

The FVAP appreciates these state election officials for taking the time during this busy election year to visit with the troops in the war zone and experience the Federal Voting Assistance Program and absentee voting process in action.

See pictures from the delegation's visit on the next page.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- CEOs Visit Troops
- 2008 FVAP Post Election Survey
- The 2010-11 Voting Assistance guide
- Thank You, State and Local Election Officials!



A FWAB Reminder

Local election officials— you may be receiving Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWABs) from persons covered by the *UOCAVA*. These FWABs may be from citizens who have moved or been deployed since submitting their request or citizens who did not receive their state ballots. Many in these situations opt to use the FWAB.

Please help ensure that all eligible *UOCAVA* citizens are entitled to vote in this year's general elections for Federal offices. If you have questions about the FWAB and who can use it, please do not hesitate to contact the FVAP.

2008 FVAP Post Election Survey

If you receive a survey, please complete it online or return it by mail. The FVAP survey of local election officials is a key tool we use to help improve the absentee voting process for all parties involved - states, local election officials, and military and overseas voters. With your input, we can better address any concerns you may have. We greatly appreciate your help in this endeavor.

The 2010-11 Voting Assistance Guide

We will soon begin developing and publishing the 2010-11 *Voting Assistance Guide*. If you have seen and used our 2008-09 *Guide*, please send your comments and suggestions for the new *Guide* to vote@fvap.ncr.gov with "VAG" in the subject line. Tell us what you liked about our 2008-09 *Guide*, as well.

Thank You State and Local Election Officials!

As in many years past, the FVAP has monitored local jurisdictions in each state to determine when ballots are being mailed to citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. This is to ensure that these citizens have as much time as possible to receive, vote, and return their absentee ballots. We thank you for your quick responses and for your continued cooperation in ensuring that Uniformed Services members and overseas citizens have the opportunity to participate in the 2008 elections. Special thanks to states that gathered ballot mailing information directly from their local election jurisdictions.



Left: Secretary Rokita (IN), Secretary Browning (FL), Secretary Cortes (PA), Secretary Bowen (CA), and Secretary Hosemann (MS) pose after lunch with troops in Afghanistan. Right: Secretary Cortes and Secretary Bowen pose with troops in Afghanistan

FVAP Contact Information

Email: vote@fvap.ncr.gov
Toll free number: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683)
Fax: 703-696-1352
Website: www.fvap.gov

Federal Voting Assistance Program
Department of Defense
1777 N. Kent St., Suite 14003
Arlington, VA 22209-1262