

MILITARY AND OVERSEAS CITIZEN VOTING NEWS

For State and Local Election Officials

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FVAP Workshop Kick-Off

On September 14, 2007, the Federal Voting Assistance Program held the first Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) workshop for the 2008 elections at Fort Meade, Maryland. In an effort to reach more VAOs worldwide, this year's kick-off was held earlier than in previous years, and additional workshops have been added to the 2007/2008 schedule.

The FVAP workshops educate VAOs on the absentee voting process, relevant materials, their role as VAOs, and available resources. State and local election officials are welcome and encouraged to attend. The FVAP will contact you if there is a workshop coming to your area.

State Voter Registration Verification Websites

The FVAP encourages the states to make available to citizens online tools that allow voters to check their registration status. These sites allow voters the opportunity to promptly know if they are registered with their jurisdiction and provide them with the opportunity to take corrective measures if necessary. Where possible, valuable info for UOCAVA citizens would include current mailing address and a depiction of the blank ballot. Twenty-two states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico currently have voter registration verification websites.

Postal Efforts

With early Presidential Primaries approaching, the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) has begun efforts to ensure that balloting materials move properly through the mail system. Last month, MPSA launched an awareness campaign to notify workers to look for balloting materials circulating through the system. Next month, MPSA will begin monitoring balloting materials and have workers report on any problems.

Also, the United States Postal Service (USPS) will soon be introducing a new, lime green tag that can be used to specifically identify and differentiate domestic and overseas absentee ballots from political mailings. The new tags are currently being printed, and will be available at local post office locations, and on the USPS website for downloading and printing.

Address Updates for Returning UOCAVA Citizens

The FVAP encourages State and local election officials to reach out to military personnel returning home from deployment and remind them to update their voter registration status. This will help to ensure that ballots are not sent to locations where these personnel are no longer stationed.

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Visit the FVAP Website!

Have you checked the local election official section of the Federal Voting Assistance Program Website? Go to www.fvap.gov and see how much useful information there is for a local election official!

UOCAVA Election Mail

Balloting materials may be sent through the mail first class, postage paid to **all** *UOCAVA* voters. Section 703.8.0 of the United States Postal Service (USPS) Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) provides guidelines to follow when preparing these materials. The DMM can be accessed online at <http://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm300/703.htm>. Additional information on *UOCAVA* election mail is available in the local election official section of the FVAP website (www.fvap.gov), including envelope design guidelines and sample ballot transmission and return envelopes.

Local election officials may choose to send and receive *UOCAVA* balloting materials faster than first-class mail. The USPS provides several options that local election officials can utilize. For materials being sent to and from overseas APO/FPOs, the USPS offer Express Mail Military Service (EMMS). EMMS offer 2-3 day service to APO/FPO locations throughout the world, and is available at all USPS facilities that accept domestic Express Mail. Section 703.2.6 of the Domestic Mail Manual (see above link) provides the guidelines and specifications for EMMS. Contact your local post office for additional information on the availability of EMMS.

For balloting materials being sent to and from non-APO/FPO locations overseas, the USPS offers several expedited service options, including Global Express Guaranteed, Express Mail International, and Priority Mail International. For more information on these services, including available destinations, visit <http://www.usps.com/business/international/welcome.htm>.

UOCAVA Compliance Recommendations

The FVAP recommends the following practices and procedures to ensure maximum compliance with *UOCAVA*:

- Differentiating between *UOCAVA* and other state absentee voters in state and local literature, in state laws and administrative codes, and on state and local election websites.
- Ensuring all employees in local election offices throughout the state are trained on the provisions of *UOCAVA*.
- Providing a website dedicated to *UOCAVA* citizens and elections in which *UOCAVA* citizens can participate.
- Preparing a state *UOCAVA* Voter Guide for publication on website and in hard copy.
- Providing sufficient ballot transit time.
- Providing simple ballot marking and return instructions with absentee ballots, including instructions to return the voted ballot by fax or email where authorized.

FVAP REMINDER: With early Presidential Primaries on the horizon, remember to mail absentee ballots to *UOCAVA* voters as soon as possible. The FVAP recommends mailing ballots at least 45 days prior to the deadline for receipt of voted absentee ballots. This will help to ensure that military and overseas voters have sufficient time to receive, vote, and return their absentee ballots in time for their vote to be counted.

FVAP Contact Information

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