

**CONSULAR NEWS  
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

**U.S. Embassy Dakar, Senegal  
July 2006**

**July's Frequently Asked Question**

**Q:** Does my French friend need a visa to travel to the United States?

**A:** If your friend's French passport was issued before October 26, 2005 and if it is machine-readable, she may travel to the U.S. on the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). People traveling on the VWP do not need visas to enter the United States. Your friend's passport is machine-readable if it has two lines of text at the bottom of the biodata page that repeats the information on the page.

French travelers with passports issued after October 26, 2005 or non-machine-readable passports issued on any date require visas to enter the United States. Information about applying for visas at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar may be found on our website at <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/sg1/wwwhvisanen.html>.

The State Department website offers further information about French passports at [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_2844.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_2844.html).

Here's a link to general information about the Visa Waiver Program:  
[http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_1990.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html).

**Voting Update**

All American citizens are reminded that 2006 is an election year in the United States. Every seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the seats in the U.S. Senate are being contested this year. Overseas citizens are eligible to participate in primary, run-off, and special elections that occur throughout the year, as well as the general elections in November.

We strongly encourage you to register to vote and/or request absentee ballots as early in the year as possible to ensure that you will receive all ballots for which you are eligible. Should questions or problems occur, you would still be able to address them in time to vote in the 2006 general elections.

**The following is the basic absentee voting process:**

- You complete an application form (see below) and send it to local election officials in the U.S.
- The local official approves your request, or contacts you for further information
- The local official sends you an absentee ballot
- You vote the ballot and send it back in time to meet your state's deadline

**The official US Government website** for overseas absentee voting assistance is the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). It has a wealth of information about absentee voting, including the downloadable absentee ballot application, state-specific instructions for completing the form, links to state and local officials, and a downloadable emergency ballot.

**Overseas citizens groups help people to vote.** We encourage you to contact Democrats Abroad, Republicans Abroad or other American citizens groups or organizations for assistance in registering to vote and requesting absentee ballots. Links to these groups are at <http://www.fvap.gov/links/ocitlinks.html>.

**To register to vote and to request an absentee ballot,** download the Federal Post Card Application at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpca.html>. You can also obtain this form from overseas American citizens groups or from the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Fill it out and send it in, following the guidelines for your state. A postage-paid envelope template, valid if you are using the U.S. postal system, is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/returnenvelope.html>.

**Each state has different voting procedures.** Information about your state's procedures is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag/vagchapter3.html>. Information about your state's deadlines to register and vote is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/primarycal.html>. A calendar of election dates is available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/primarycal.html>.

**States sometimes make last-minute changes.** There may be late changes to your state's voting calendar, procedures or deadlines. When these occur, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) will issue a News Release. News Releases are available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/releases.html>.

**Be an educated voter.** Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues is widely available and easy to obtain via the Internet. Use the links appearing on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at <http://www.fvap.gov/links/otherlinks.html>, or choose any one of several search engines to locate articles and information.

**An emergency ballot is available.** If the ballot receipt deadline is approaching, and you have not yet received the blank ballot from local officials, you can download an emergency ballot, write in the names of the candidates and the offices for which they are running, and send it back in time to meet your state's ballot receipt deadline. The emergency ballot (SF-186, Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot, or FWAB) is available on the Internet at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/forms.html>.

**The Voting Assistance Officer** at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in Dakar is available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, call 823-4296 ext. 2204 or send an e-mail to [ConsularDakar@state.gov](mailto:ConsularDakar@state.gov). Look for notices from the Embassy/Consulate throughout the year relating to the 2006 elections.

Again, we strongly encourage you to begin this process as soon as possible.

## Additional Frequently Asked Questions During the Primary Season

### **1. Am I Registered to Vote?**

To check the status of your voter registration, contact your State or Local Election Office. The Federal Voting Assistance Program website has a listing of all the State Election Office's websites. Simply visit our website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) and select the State Election Site. Once at this homepage, you'll find a great deal of election information including how to contact your local election office.

Seven states, as well as the **District of Columbia**, and **Puerto Rico**, allow you to check your voter registration status online. The states providing this online service are: **Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Delaware, South Carolina and Virginia**. Visit this website for more specific information on registering in these states:

<http://www.fvap.gov/vao/stregissites.html>

### **2 Where am I registered to vote?**

In order to determine where you are currently registered to vote, contact the election office where you last resided in the United States. If you are unsure of the county you live in, visit [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) and select "What is My County".

### **3. How do I change where I'm registered to vote?**

In order to change the jurisdiction where you are registered to vote you must change your residency. Changing one's residency requires that you are physically present in that location and have the intent to remain a resident. Whenever you move into a new county or state, you should always contact the Local Election Office to inform them that you have changed your address. Communicating with your Local Election Office is the best way to help them help you. You can also signify that you have a new address by filling out block 6 in the FPCA. If you have previously registered to vote in a jurisdiction other than the one in which you are applying, indicate "previously registered in (location)". In order to obtain more information regarding this procedure you can visit [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) and select "State by State Instructions".

### **4. What do I do if I haven't received my ballot but I sent FPCA in on time?**

One of the best ways to check on the status of your FPCA is to contact your Local Election Office. Any questions regarding FPCA status should be addressed to them. To find out when your state mails out ballots, refer to the *2006-07 Voting Assistance Guide* (found online at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), select "State by State Instructions"). If election day is drawing near, use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to vote.

### **5. Do I need a notary on my FPCA?**

Out of the 50 states, the four U.S. territories and the District of Columbia, 50 do not require a notary on the FPCA. The five that **DO** require a notary on the FPCA are: American Samoa, Michigan (only applies to civilians), Minnesota, Puerto Rico, and Vermont. In order to check the status of your state's rules regarding notary requirements go to:

<http://www.fvap.gov/vao/notaryreqts.html>.

### **6. Can I Be Registered In Two Different States?**

Voting rights for the state you claim apply when you can provide proof of residence, i.e: driver's license, water/gas bill, etc. (Each state's requirements are different, check with your state's election board to see what they require). You may only have one legal residence at a time, but Uniformed Service personnel and their family members may change residency each time they are transferred to a new location. If you continue to receive voting materials from your old county, notify the election board to remove you from their local voter list.

### **7. What are the implications for registering where I'm stationed?**

Exercising your right to vote in elections **for Federal offices only** does not affect the determination of residence or domicile for purposes of any tax imposed under Federal, state or local law. Voting in an election **for Federal offices only** may not be used as the sole basis to determine residency for the purposes of imposing state and local taxes. If you claim a particular state as your residence and have other ties with that state *in addition to voting*, then you may be liable for state and local taxation, depending upon that particular state law. Consult your legal counsel for specific questions or situations.

### **8. How do I get information about voting and upcoming elections?**

If you have questions about where or how to vote, what forms to use or state specific regulations, consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* available in print form from FVAP or your Voting Assistance Officer, or its online version available at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)

The Democratic and Republican parties have organized groups in many countries throughout the world, and information may be obtained by contacting their umbrella organizations:

**Democrats Abroad**, (202) 863-8103, [www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org),

**Republicans Abroad International**, (202) 608-1423, [www.republicansabroad.com](http://www.republicansabroad.com)

FVAP also offers the **Voting Information Center (VIC)** that provides information on elections and recorded messages from U.S. Senators, U.S. Representatives and state Governors. Callers may connect directly to the office of U.S. Senators, U.S. Representative, Governor or their chief state election official through the VIC. The VIC also provides direct access to Service Voting Action Officers during normal business hours in the U.S. Telephone numbers:

Commercial 1-800-438-VOTE (Collect calls not accepted).

DSN 425-1343. DSN use is authorized for all military and family members.

Toll free numbers are available for over 60 countries (Consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* or [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) for a full listing)

### **9. How do I get a FPCA?**

**In Person:** You can obtain a cardstock version of the FPCA through Voting Assistance Officers at military installations or at U.S. embassies/consulates.

**Electronic:** There is an online version of the FPCA (OFPCA), and it is accepted by all states and territories except American Samoa and Guam. The form is available on the FVAP's website at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpc.html> in PDF format and can be filled in on-line, printed out, signed, dated, placed in an envelope with proper postage and then mailed to the appropriate Local Election Official (LEO). The form requires Acrobat Reader 6 or higher.

**Having trouble?** If you are still having trouble obtaining a FPCA, feel free to contact FVAP's Ombudsman service at 800-438-8683.

#### **10. What's the difference between a FPCA and a FWAB?**

A FPCA is a **Federal Post Card Application** (Standard Form 76) that should be filled out and sent to your local election official every year and whenever you change addresses, in order to ensure that you receive the necessary ballots with adequate time to vote through the mail. The FPCA is used to register, and/or request an absentee ballot. Postage is paid if mailed within U.S. postal system, including APO and FPO addresses and U.S. Embassies and Consulates. If mailed in a foreign postal system, international airmail postage must be affixed. Some states allow the electronic transmission (fax and/or email) of FPCAs, consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* for state or territory specific procedures.

A FWAB is a **Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot** (Standard Form 186) that is used as a backup "emergency" ballot in the case the regular state ballot does not reach the *UOCAVA* voter in adequate time for voting. It contains both a write-in area and a special security envelope, and the same postage/ mailing conditions apply as for the FPCA. FWABs are available at U.S. embassies/consulates (also available online at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)). Generally, a citizen outside the United States can only use the FWAB under very specific conditions:

#### **THE CITIZEN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES MUST:**

- Be located outside the United States (including APO/FPO addresses);
- Have applied for a regular ballot early enough so the request is received by the appropriate local election official not later than the State deadline; or the date that is 30 days before the general election; **AND**
- Have not received the requested regular absentee ballot from the state.

For additional information about the FPCA and the FWAB refer to chapter two of the *2006-07 Voting Assistance guide* (available online at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).)

From the States . . .

#### **NORTH DAKOTA:**

As of May 22, 2006 North Dakota residents that are covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* may vote in Primary Elections using the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot even if they have not yet submitted a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The FWAB submitted by the voter will be simultaneously considered the voter's application and their voted ballot. This ballot also allows a qualified person to vote for all the offices and measures that would appear on their precinct ballot if they were voting in person.

#### **SOUTH CAROLINA:**

The Governor of **South Carolina** recently signed into law four changes affecting UOCAVA voters.

- UOCAVA voters are now required to provide their social security number on the FPCA.
- South Carolina Election Offices will now mail out ballots at least 45 days prior to the election.
- Voters may now receive blank ballots via email or fax under any circumstances.

- Voters may now return the voted ballot via email or fax to the County Election Office.

#### Upcoming Primaries

##### **July** Primaries:

Georgia – July 18

Oklahoma – July 25

##### **August** Primaries:

Kansas – August 1

Tennessee – August 3

Colorado – August 8

Connecticut – August 8

Michigan – August 8

Missouri – August 8

Nevada – August 15

Alaska – August 22

Wyoming – August 22

##### **September** Primaries:

Guam – September 2

Florida – September 5

Virgin Islands – September 11

Arizona – September 12

Delaware – September 12

District of Columbia-September 12

Maryland – September 12

Minnesota – September 12

New Hampshire – September 12

New York – September 12

Rhode Island – September 12

Vermont – September 12

Wisconsin – September 12

Massachusetts – September 19

Washington – September 19

Hawaii – September 23

#### **Embassy Employment Opportunity**

OPEN TO: Qualified U.S. Citizens

POSITION: Office Management Specialist

OPENING DATE: July 12, 2006

CLOSING DATE: July 26, 2006

WORK HOURS: Full time 40 hours/week

**ELIGIBILITY:** U.S. Citizen EFM and any U.S. Citizen already holding the required work and residency permit for employment in country. Applicant should hold a current Top Secret Security Clearance or be eligible to obtain one.

**CLEARANCES:** Top Secret is required

**GRADE LEVEL:** Full performance Grade FP-07, salary US\$ 31,526 p.a. Equivalent grade under Local Compensation Plan (LCP) is FSN 7, with a per annum salary of CFA 7,719,225. Hiring under the LCP will be subject to U.S. Minimum Wage Supplement for locally hired U.S. citizens in strict compliance with and guidance by the “Rockefeller Amendment”.

For further details and full position description, please go to <http://dakar.usembassy.gov> and follow the links to the Human Resources Section (Employment opportunities). If you meet the required qualifications and wish to apply, please send your Curriculum-vitae and cover letter to the following e-mail address: [PersonnelDakar@state.gov](mailto:PersonnelDakar@state.gov).

### **Crime Watch**

The following crimes against private American citizens were reported to the Embassy in June:

1. An American had her purse stolen from her unlocked room in a house in the village of Petit Mbao while she was asleep. The purse contained her U.S. passport, credit cards, and cash. The victim was not harmed.

2. An American living in the United States reported losing thousands of dollars to an Internet scam based in Senegal. The following information about scams is from the State Department's Consular Information Sheet for Senegal at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1013.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1013.html):

Typically, business scam operations begin with an unsolicited communication (usually by e-mail) from an unknown individual who describes a situation that promises quick financial gain, often by the transfer of a large sum of money or valuables out of West Africa. The perpetrators of these scams often claim to be victims of various western African conflicts (notably refugees from Sierra Leone) or relatives of present or former political leaders.

There are many variations of these business scams. In some cases, a series of “advance fees” must be paid in order to conclude the transaction, such as fees to open a bank account, or to pay certain taxes. In fact, the final payoff does not exist since the purpose of the scam is simply to collect the advance fees. Another common variation consists of a request for the U.S. citizen's bank account information, purportedly to transfer money into the account. Once the perpetrator obtains this information, however, he or she then simply transfers all money out of the victim's account. Other variations include apparently legitimate business deals requiring advance payments on contracts and offers to sell gold at a very low price. In the last case, the seller may present real gold to be verified then substitute fake gold and disappear with the payment.

The best way to avoid becoming a victim of advance-fee fraud or business scam is to use common sense: if an offer seems too good to be true, it is probably a scam. You should carefully research any unsolicited business proposal originating in Senegal before you commit funds, provide goods or services, or undertake travel. For additional information, the Department of

State's brochure, Advance Fee Business Scams is available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at <http://travel.state.gov>.

Visa scams take advantage of people who wish to travel to the U.S. Generally, these scams "guarantee" a U.S. visa for participants who pay a large sum of money to register for a conference or attend an event in the United States. In fact, only consular officers of the U.S. State Department may issue visas, so any offer that guarantees a U.S. visa is a scam. Please refer to the State Department web site at <http://travel.state.gov> or the web site of the U.S. Embassy in Dakar at <http://dakar.usembassy.gov> for authoritative information about the visa process and the costs involved.

In addition to business and visa scams, personal and dating scams are also prevalent. U.S. citizens should be wary of persons claiming to live in Senegal who profess friendship or romantic interest over the Internet. A chat or e-mail exchange which quickly moves to discussion of intimate matters is often an indication of a scam. Beware of any request or appeal for money.

In a typical personal scam, the scammer asks the U.S. citizen to send money for essential purposes: living or travel expenses, medical treatment, visa costs, or bribes to free unjustly imprisoned family members. Scammers often claim emergency circumstances, hoping that the intended victim will send money quickly and without careful consideration. Many variations of these scams exist, all with the principal goal of soliciting money from the U.S. citizen. Several Americans in West Africa have reported losing thousands of dollars through such scams. The anonymity of the Internet means that the U.S. citizen cannot be sure of the real name, age, marital status, nationality, or even gender of the correspondent. In some cases, the correspondent is a fictitious persona created only to lure the U.S. citizen into sending money.

### **Consular Hours**

Routine American citizen services are available Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Emergency American citizen services are available during U.S. Embassy normal working hours. For an after-hours emergency involving an American citizen, please call 637-9566.

We are also available by e-mail at [consulardakar@state.gov](mailto:consulardakar@state.gov).

### **Have You Left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau?**

If you have left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau, please e-mail us at [consulardakar@state.gov](mailto:consulardakar@state.gov) so we can remove your name from the warden registration database. If you would like to remain on the newsletter mailing list, please let us know in your e-mail.