

The Federal Voting Assistance Program

The Sixteenth Report

This report has been prepared by the staff of the
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Washington Headquarters Services
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) administers the federal responsibilities of the Presidential designee (Secretary of Defense), under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* of 1986. The *UOCAVA* covers all members of the Uniformed Services, merchant marine and their family members, and all U.S. civilian citizens residing outside the United States---more than six million potential voters.

This report corresponds to the activity for the period 1996 through 2000. The survey of Uniformed Services members produced weighted statistics that will be used for comparative purposes with previous reports.

- The total voting participation rate among the Uniformed Services was 69% in 2000, as compared to the 51% rate of the general public. The 69% participation rate includes those voting absentee, voting in person, and attempting to vote. This is a five percentage point increase over 1996.
- Among federal civilian employees overseas, the total voting participation rate was 65% in 2000. The participation rate includes 52% voting absentee and 13% either voting in person or attempting to vote.
- Voting participation among non-federally employed overseas U.S. citizens remained constant from 1996 with 37% participating in 2000. Participation includes 20% voting absentee, 2% voting in person and 15% attempting to vote.
- In 1998, a non-Presidential election year, 40% of the Uniformed Services either voted in person (18%) or by absentee ballot (22%). Non-federally employed overseas U.S. citizens had a 17% voting participation rate and 51% of federal civilians overseas participated. The general public voting rate was 36%.
- The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) form continues to be the primary method used to register and request an absentee ballot. Of those who requested an absentee ballot, more Uniformed Services members used the FPCA (65%) compared to federal civilians overseas (60%) and non-federally employed overseas U.S. citizens (55%). Ninety-two percent of the local election official (LEO) respondents reported receiving FPCA registration and absentee ballot requests.
- For all populations, the most commonly used form of voting assistance was the Voting Assistance Officer (VAO), followed by the *Voting Assistance Guide*.
- The 2000 general election represents the third time that the FVAP's Electronic Transmission Service was in use for a Presidential election. This is an emergency measure to help enfranchise Uniformed Services members and overseas citizens. There was a decrease in the number of faxes processed compared with 1996. In

2000, a total of 16,683 pages of documents (compared with 19,655 pages in 1996) were transmitted.

- Seventy-six percent of the LEOs surveyed accepted electronically transmitted (faxed) FPCA requests for absentee ballots in 2000. Eighteen percent faxed blank absentee ballots to *UOCAVA* citizens and 13% accepted faxed voted ballots from these citizens.

INFORMATION SUPPORT

Voting Assistance Guide

FVAP publishes biennial editions of the *Voting Assistance Guide (Guide)*. This is a handbook of state voting procedures and the primary source of information to carry out a successful absentee voting assistance program. The *Guide* communicates state voting requirements to VAOs and U.S. citizens covered by the *UOCAVA*. FVAP distributes the *Guide* to states, U.S. embassies/consulates, military installations and overseas citizen organizations worldwide. FVAP staff works extensively with states to ensure an up-to-date, accurate description of a state's voting procedures. The *Guide* is also available on-line at the FVAP web site and is updated continuously.

Voting Over the Internet Pilot Project

Over the past few years, there has been growing interest in using Internet technology to make voting more accessible from remote areas. To help overcome ballot transit time obstacles and to maximize access to the polls for *UOCAVA* citizens, FVAP and a group of state and local election officials from South Carolina, Florida, Texas and Utah conducted a small-scale pilot project during the 2000 Presidential election to examine the feasibility of using the Internet for secure remote registration and voting. Voters in FVAP's Voting Over the Internet (VOI) Pilot Project participated from 21 states and 11 countries. Ninety-one Uniformed Services members, their dependents, and overseas citizens used the pilot system to register to vote absentee. Eighty-four citizens voted using the VOI system. This was the first time that binding votes were cast over the Internet for federal, state, and local offices.

FVAP Web Site Initiatives

FVAP has enhanced its web site resources for use by *UOCAVA* citizens and the states. The web site contains information on all FVAP programs, e.g., Get-Out-the-Vote Campaign, the Ombudsman Service, the Electronic Transmission Service, and the State Legislative Initiatives Program. Additionally, VAO training and all FVAP publications can be viewed or downloaded on the web site. Many election-related links have been added during the past four years to assist *UOCAVA* citizens in the electoral process.

In 1999, FVAP developed an on-line version of the FPCA to improve access to the form by *UOCAVA* citizens. The on-line form is an alternative to the card stock FPCA and, to date, 45 states including the District of Columbia have agreed to accept it.

FVAP also added interactive features to the content of its “Communicating with Your Elected Official” pamphlet making the information more current, accessible and easy to navigate.

Within the past year the entire FVAP web site has been restructured to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d).

Get-Out-the-Vote Campaign

The FVAP’s 2000 “Get-Out-the-Vote” campaign received approximately \$34,000,000 worth of donated public service advertising from national and local broadcast, print, outdoor advertising and Internet outlets. This campaign continued to be among The Advertising Council’s top ten in donated media value. The National Association of Secretaries of State hosted the campaign’s web site that linked citizens directly to registration and voting information for their state. The campaign also established a cooperative effort with MTV to help reach the 18-24 year old audience. Since younger citizens’ voting participation has been declining for the past twenty years, they were a particular focus of the campaign. Another first for the 2000 campaign was the use of Internet banner ads that resulted in nearly \$1,000,000 of donated publicity. The Advertising Council distributed the “Vote” public service announcements to over 1400 national and local broadcast and cable television networks and outlets, 7500 radio stations, 8000 newspapers and 500 outdoor advertising companies.

PROBLEM AREAS

Ballot Transit Time

Ballot transit time remains a concern. Of those Uniformed Services members who did not vote in 2000, 22% responded that they did not vote in the 2000 election because they did not receive their ballot at all and 7% reported their reason for not voting was that they received their ballot late. Eighteen percent of the non-federally employed overseas citizens reported that they did not vote because they did not receive their ballot; 2% responded that their reason for not voting was that the ballot arrived too late. Nineteen percent of federal civilians overseas cited the reason for not voting was that they did not receive their ballot, while 5% said their reason for not voting was that their ballot arrived too late.

Communications

Of those who did not vote, 26% of the Uniformed Services members cited that their main reason for not voting in 2000 was that they did not know how to get an absentee ballot. This was also the case for 49% of non-federally employed overseas citizens and 21% of federal civilians overseas who did not vote. Also, 20% of Uniformed Service members, 18% of non-federally employed overseas citizens and 26% of federal civilians overseas responded that they did not vote because the process of absentee voting discouraged them.

Procedures

The most frequent complaints that VAOs in the Uniformed Services received involved communications and procedures. Eighty-one percent of these VAOs who responded did not receive any complaints. Of the 19% who did receive complaints, fifty-two percent said the most frequent complaint was no response from the LEO to the FPCA. Next listed was that there was no way to know if the LEO received the FPCA.

Only 1% of the Uniformed Services VAOs who received complaints reported the citizen's difficulty of having an FPCA or ballot notarized. Forty-seven states, the District of Columbia and one territory have eliminated the requirement for notarization of election materials. Six percent of non-federally employed overseas citizens noted this as a reason for not voting.

Incomplete Applications

The following percentage of LEOs reported receiving at least one FPCA with these problems in 2000: no or inadequate voting residence address (73%), a seven percentage point increase over 1996; the applicant's failure to provide an adequate or legible return mailing address (35%), a 10 percentage point increase over 1996; the applicant's applying to the wrong jurisdiction (26%), up from 20% in 1996. Others encountered illegible handwriting (23%) and no signature (18%).

TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

To help address absentee registration and voting problem areas, FVAP designed, as an option to the card stock form, an on-line FPCA and emphasized its use---45 states currently accept it. Since this form can be filled out on a computer, it eliminates the legibility problems experienced by LEOs. FVAP also conducted the VOI Pilot Project for remote registration and voting for the 2000 general election. This small-scale project solved virtually all of the problems cited in the previous section. The Pilot Project system automated and standardized the registration application process. The system design included a registration feature that enabled the Pilot Project voting participants to verify whether or not their application had been approved and find out when absentee ballots were available. It eliminated incomplete and illegible registration applications through several system features. The system prompted users to complete all required fields in the Electronic Federal Post Card Application (EFPCA) form before submitting the form to the LEO. Key stroking of information replaced handwriting. The citizen was required to sign the EFPCA form with a Department of Defense Public Key Infrastructure digital certificate, which provided the necessary identification and authentication of the citizen and replaced the need for a witness or notary signature. The digital signature also served as identification and authentication for ballot processing. The ballots were encrypted and submitted through secure socket layering. Ballot transit time was reduced from days to minutes.

INTRODUCTION

This is the sixteenth report since the enactment of the *Federal Voting Assistance Act* of 1955. It covers the time period from 1996 through 2000. Certain sections include 2001 data to provide current information on legislative initiatives and the Department of Defense electronic voting project.

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* of 1986 (42 USC 1973ff) provides the authority for the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). Under the *UOCAVA*, the President designates the head of a federal department or agency to administer federal voting assistance responsibilities. Executive Order 12642 in 1988 named the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential designee for administering the *UOCAVA*. The Director, FVAP carries out the federal functions for the Presidential designee.

The *UOCAVA* requires the states to allow certain citizens to register and vote in elections for federal offices using absentee procedures. These citizens include members of the Uniformed Services and the merchant marine and their family members, the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, federal civilian employees overseas, and other overseas U.S. citizens not affiliated with the federal government. This totals more than 6,000,000 eligible voters worldwide. In addition to voting in federal elections, most states allow the military to register and vote absentee for state and local offices.

Executive Branch departments and agencies with employees overseas provide voting assistance under guidance from the Presidential designee. These departments and agencies utilize informational materials and services provided by FVAP. The Department of State, through its embassies and consulates, provides absentee voting information and assistance to U.S. citizens outside the United States. In addition, U.S. embassies and consulates, in selected areas, make the diplomatic pouch available to citizens for sending election materials back to the U.S.

The U.S. Postal Service and the Military Postal Service facilitate the transmission of election materials between the voter and local election officials.

The General Services Administration prints the Federal Post Card Application and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot and distributes these forms upon request from federal departments and agencies.

The U.S. Attorney General is authorized to enforce the provisions of the *UOCAVA*.

FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Since 1996 there have been significant improvements in facilitating absentee registration and voting procedures for citizens covered by the *UOCAVA*. These improvements include the use of technology to maximize access to the polls. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) conducts continual education and outreach efforts via its web site, news releases, and various publications; national and international conferences of state and local government officials; worldwide voting workshops and other forums; and the media, e.g., American Forces Information Service, Armed Forces Radio and Television Services, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), national and international broadcast and print services, and Get-Out-the-Vote Campaign Public Service Announcements.

PROGRESS OF STATES IN IMPLEMENTING THE *UNIFORMED AND OVERSEAS CITIZENS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT OF 1986*

FVAP also pursues state legislative initiatives and publishes (biennially) a comprehensive *Voting Assistance Guide* that provides state-by-state procedures and deadlines for submitting voting materials. Because election procedures are based on state law, FVAP works with states to ease absentee voting requirements that may place undue burdens on our Uniformed Services members, their eligible family members, and U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. FVAP's pursuit of state legislative initiatives has enhanced the opportunity of our *UOCAVA* citizens to participate in the electoral process at all levels of government.

There are interstate differences in voting procedures that present difficulties for citizens covered by the *UOCAVA* and that can be a source of confusion to Voting Assistance Officers and local election officials (LEOs). Understanding the absentee voting procedures of one state does not translate necessarily into being able to assist a potential voter from another state and may result in unintentionally misleading a voter. Furthermore, the lack of uniformity within a state only compounds the confusion by factoring in LEOs who may not know that different procedures are in effect in different jurisdictions and therefore, may give conflicting advice or require more stringent procedures than are appropriate. Additionally, registration and voting procedures may vary for people within the same family, i.e., Uniformed Services and their family members.

Many states have adopted legislation that has brought simplicity, uniformity and clarity to the absentee voting process. Nevertheless, obstacles remain. Two significant problems that continue to threaten enfranchisement are lack of adequate ballot transit time and not knowing how to obtain an absentee ballot. FVAP efforts to resolve these problems include expanding outreach programs, conducting state-of-the-art information technology projects such as the successful Voting Over the Internet Pilot Project for Election 2000, and diligently pursuing state legislative initiatives to facilitate absentee voting for *UOCAVA* citizens.

PROGRESS WORKING WITH STATES

FVAP continually works with state and local government officials, assists states and other U.S. jurisdictions in adopting the mandatory and recommended provisions of the *UOCAVA*, and advises them on the applicability of federal laws and regulations to their individual electoral systems. FVAP also provides an Ombudsman Service for all persons covered by the *UOCAVA* and for state government officials to assist in resolving absentee voting problems. The Program publicizes continually the right to register and vote to a worldwide audience of U.S. citizens.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Each year, FVAP formulates and sends recommended legislative initiatives to states and territories to adopt. We have experienced great success over the years working with states to enact these initiatives as the following chart shows:

	1992	1996	2000	2001	Change
1. 40-45 days transit time	37	40	42	42	5
2. One FPCA for all elections	47	46	47	48	1
3. Remove notary requirement	42	46	48	49	7
4. Eliminate "Not Earlier Than" restrictions	41	44	46	49	8
5. Allow late registration	15	21	23	24	9
6. Provide state special write-in absentee ballot	23	25	26	27	4
7. Reference to UOCAVA	25	29	31	33	8
8. Allow electronic transmission of election materials	36	43	46	48	12
9. Expand FWAB use	3	5	6	7	4
10. Emergency authority to state Chief Election Official	7	7	9	11	4
11. Enfranchise citizens who have never resided in the U.S.	0	0	8	8	8

Significant progress has been made in allowing electronic transmission of election materials and late registration, eliminating the “not earlier than” dates for absentee ballot requests, and enfranchising U.S. citizens who have never lived in the U.S. The specific initiatives we request states to pass and the extent of our progress in the states and territories are summarized below. The figure after the initiative indicates the increase in the number of initiatives passed from 1996 to the date of this report.

1. Provide Forty to Forty-Five Days Transit Time For Absentee Ballots to Uniformed Services and Overseas Citizens. (+2)

This initiative is especially beneficial for Uniformed Services members and overseas citizens since it ensures sufficient time for the ballot to be mailed out by LEOs and returned by the voter. Some states allow late counting, which also helps overseas citizens meet state deadlines for counting. Thirty-eight states, the District of Columbia and three territories listed below now provide forty or more days transit time:

Alabama	Iowa	Nebraska	South Carolina
Alaska	Kansas	Nevada	South Dakota
Connecticut	Kentucky	New Jersey	Tennessee
Delaware	Louisiana	New Mexico	Texas
District of Columbia	Maine	New York	Utah
Florida	Maryland	North Carolina	Virginia
Georgia	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Virgin Islands
Guam	Michigan	Ohio	West Virginia
Idaho	Mississippi	Oregon	Wyoming
Illinois	Missouri	Pennsylvania	
Indiana	Montana	Puerto Rico	

2. Use of a Single Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to Serve as a Request for Registration and/or Ballot for All Elections Held During the Calendar Year. (+2)

Many citizens mistakenly believe that one application for a primary ballot serves as a simultaneous request for a general election ballot. Forty-five states, the District of Columbia, Guam and the Virgin Islands have enacted such legislation:

Alaska	Illinois	Montana	South Carolina
Arizona	Indiana	Nebraska	South Dakota
Arkansas	Iowa	Nevada	Tennessee
California	Kansas	New Hampshire	Texas
Colorado	Louisiana	New Jersey	Utah
Delaware	Maine	New York	Vermont
District of Columbia	Maryland	North Carolina	Virginia
Florida	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Virgin Islands
Georgia	Michigan	Ohio	Washington
Guam	Minnesota	Oklahoma	West Virginia
Hawaii	Mississippi	Oregon	Wisconsin
Idaho	Missouri	Rhode Island	Wyoming

3. Remove the Notary Requirement on Any Election Materials; Replace with Self-Administered Oath, if Necessary. (+3)

Most states have enacted this initiative. The requirement for notarization can be a deterrent to voting for many citizens. Some overseas citizens have paid up to \$90 to have their voting materials notarized. Forty-seven states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands have removed notary requirements on all election materials for citizens covered by the *UOCAVA*:

Alabama	Arkansas	Connecticut	Florida
Alaska	California	Delaware	Georgia
Arizona	Colorado	District of Columbia	Hawaii

Idaho	Minnesota	North Dakota	Utah
Illinois	Missouri	Ohio	Virginia
Indiana	Montana	Oklahoma	Virgin Islands
Iowa	Nebraska	Oregon	Washington
Kansas	Nevada	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
Kentucky	New Hampshire	Rhode Island	Wisconsin
Louisiana	New Jersey	South Carolina	Wyoming
Maine	New Mexico	South Dakota	
Maryland	New York	Tennessee	
Massachusetts	North Carolina	Texas	

4. Eliminate Any “Not Earlier Than” Acceptance Dates for Registration or Absentee Ballot Requests. (+5)

Only a few states will not accept an FPCA if it arrives before a specified date. This “not earlier than” limitation causes a problem for citizens covered by the *UOCAVA* who, by voting drives and other activities held at various times throughout an election year, are motivated immediately to submit requests for registration and/or absentee ballots. Those who act early could have their application rejected because LEOs received them too early. The following 45 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have lifted “not earlier than” restrictions for citizens covered by the *UOCAVA*:

Alabama	Illinois	Nevada	South Dakota
Alaska	Indiana	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Arizona	Iowa	New Jersey	Texas
Arkansas	Kansas	New Mexico	Utah
California	Kentucky	New York	Vermont
Colorado	Louisiana	North Carolina	Virginia
Connecticut	Maine	North Dakota	Virgin Islands
Delaware	Maryland	Oklahoma	West Virginia
District of Columbia	Massachusetts	Oregon	Wisconsin
Florida	Minnesota	Pennsylvania	Wyoming
Guam	Mississippi	Puerto Rico	
Hawaii	Missouri	Rhode Island	
Idaho	Nebraska	South Carolina	

5. Establish Late Registration Procedures for Persons Recently Separated from the Uniformed Services and Civilian Overseas Employment. (+3)

Some recently discharged Uniformed Services members may not know in which jurisdiction they will be living at the time of discharge. Often the date of discharge comes after the state has closed its registration books. Flexibility to allow these individuals to register and vote under special late registration procedures helps to solve this problem. Twenty-three states and the Virgin Islands currently allow such procedures:

California	Massachusetts	New Jersey	Rhode Island
Connecticut	Missouri	North Carolina	South Carolina
Florida	Montana	North Dakota	Utah
Illinois	Nebraska	Ohio	Virginia
Iowa	Nevada	Oklahoma	Virgin Islands
Kansas	New Hampshire	Oregon	Wyoming

6. Provide for a State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot. (+2)

Submariners, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries and others at sea or in remote areas use the state special write-in absentee ballot to vote when they will be out of communication for extended periods of time due to military contingencies or special circumstances and unable to receive regular absentee ballots sent in the normal time frame. Individuals request, and states may provide, this special write-in absentee ballot 90 days before an election and allow voters to write in the names of candidates or the party for whom they want to vote in the election. This ballot generally includes a full slate of offices to be voted upon (federal, state and local offices). This state special write-in absentee ballot is different from the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot which can only be used as a back-up ballot from overseas and only if the regularly requested absentee ballot is not received in a timely manner. See Initiative 9.

The following lists the twenty-seven states that now have state special write-in absentee ballots:

Alaska	Georgia	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Arizona	Indiana	North Dakota	Texas
California	Iowa	Oklahoma	Utah
Colorado	Louisiana	Oregon	Virginia
Connecticut	Maine	Pennsylvania	Washington
Delaware	Missouri	Rhode Island	Wisconsin
Florida	Nebraska	South Carolina	

7. Incorporate Reference to the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* of 1986 into State Election Code. (+4)

In 1986, Congress updated and consolidated the provisions of the *Federal Voting Assistance Act* of 1955 and the *Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act* of 1975 into the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. Some states have not updated their elections codes to reference the *UOCAVA*. Citation of the *UOCAVA* helps state election officials and interested citizens find guidance to the current, applicable federal law and increase their familiarity with the statute and its applications. Thirty-one states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands have incorporated reference to the *UOCAVA* into their state election codes:

Alabama	Hawaii	Nevada	Utah
Arizona	Idaho	New Jersey	Virginia
California	Indiana	New Mexico	Virgin Islands
Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	West Virginia
Connecticut	Kansas	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
Delaware	Louisiana	Oregon	Wyoming
District of Columbia	Maryland	Rhode Island	
Florida	Montana	South Carolina	
Georgia	Nebraska	Texas	

8. Allow the Use of Electronic Transmission of Election Materials. (+5)

Many states have adopted this initiative to some degree. They allow voters to do one or more of the following: fax the FPCA for registration and ballot request to the LEO, receive a blank ballot from the LEO, return a voted ballot to the LEO. In 1990, during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, FVAP provided the Electronic Transmission Service for the first time as an emergency measure to enfranchise Uniformed Services members. Since then, FVAP has maintained this service. Forty-four states, the District of Columbia and three territories allow some or all aspects of electronic transmission:

Alaska	Idaho	Mississippi	Puerto Rico
American Samoa	Illinois	Missouri	Rhode Island
Arizona	Indiana	Montana	South Carolina
Arkansas	Iowa	Nebraska	Tennessee
California	Kansas	Nevada	Texas
Colorado	Kentucky	New Jersey	Utah
Connecticut	Louisiana	North Carolina	Vermont
Delaware	Maine	North Dakota	Virginia
District of Columbia	Maryland	Ohio	Virgin Islands
Florida	Massachusetts	Oklahoma	Washington
Georgia	Michigan	Oregon	West Virginia
Hawaii	Minnesota	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin

9. Expand the Use of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). (+2)

The FWAB is a federal ballot designed for use by overseas Uniformed Services members or other U.S citizens overseas who have already applied for a regular absentee ballot. If the regular absentee ballot does not arrive timely, these voters may obtain the FWAB, vote it by writing in names of candidates or political parties and return the FWAB to the LEO.

Currently, the FWAB, which is pre-positioned overseas at U.S. embassies/consulates and military installations, may be used only in general elections. By expanding its use to include special, primary and runoff elections, citizens would not be disenfranchised because they did not receive their regular ballots in a timely manner. We also request

that the FWAB be used as a simultaneous registration application and ballot. Iowa alone allows the FWAB for registration and as a ballot. The following seven states have expanded the FWAB's use to include elections other than the general election, offices other than federal offices or its use in the U.S.:

Connecticut	Montana	Rhode Island	West Virginia
Iowa	Oklahoma	Virginia	

10. Provide the State's Chief Election Official with Emergency Authority During Periods of Declared Emergency. (+4)

The following ten states and the Virgin Islands have designated a chief election official to work with FVAP to establish expeditious methods for handling absentee ballots during declared emergencies:

Colorado	Indiana	Missouri	Virginia
Florida	Iowa	New Mexico	Virgin Islands
Hawaii	Maryland	North Carolina	

11. Enfranchise Citizens Who Have Never Resided in the U.S. (+8)

While some U.S. citizens who have never resided in the U.S. are subject to all other requirements of U.S. citizenship, they are not eligible to vote. Eight states allow these citizens to vote where either parent is eligible to vote under *UOCAVA*:

Georgia	New York	Oregon	Tennessee
Iowa	Oklahoma	Rhode Island	Wisconsin

PROGRAM RESULTS

Post-election Survey Overview

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) conducts post-election surveys to: determine participation in the electoral process by citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*, assess the impact of efforts designed to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee, evaluate other progress made to facilitate absentee voting participation, and identify any remaining obstacles to voting by these citizens.

In 2000, to evaluate the success of the FVAP and obtain information on the remaining obstacles to absentee voting, a separate survey was sent to each of the following population groups: Uniformed Services in the U.S. and overseas, federal civilians overseas, non-federally employed overseas citizens, Uniformed Services Voting Assistance Officers, and local election officials who process registration applications and send out absentee ballots. For the first time, in 2000, questionnaires were available over the Internet for responses from these groups. Also, this year the report reflects a breakdown of the data for Uniformed Services respondents into those residing in the U.S. and those overseas.

At the time of the election and this survey, almost 80% of the Uniformed Services sample were stationed in the U.S. and 20% were stationed overseas. Following *UOCAVA*, all of the federal civilian sample and the sample of non-federally employed overseas citizens were outside the U.S. and its territories at the time of the election and survey.

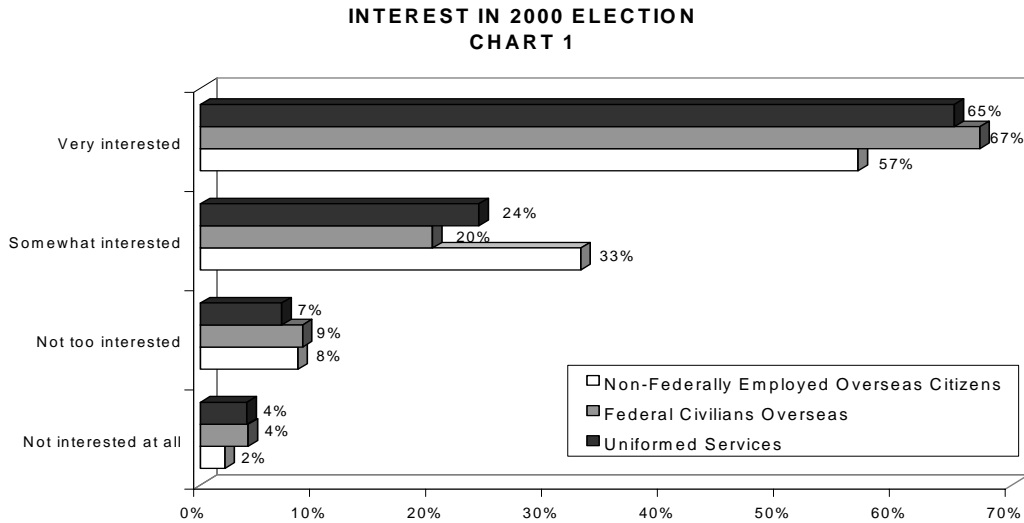
The surveys were distributed beginning September 16, 2000 with shipments to U.S. embassies and consulates chosen to participate in the survey. Surveys were timed to arrive to the survey populations during the week of the election. Web sites were available for responses by the week of the election also. Responses were accepted until March 30, 2001.

Discussion

Interest in the Election-There was a marked increase in interest since the last Presidential election among the Uniformed Services voting population. Sixty-five percent of Uniformed Services members compared to 55% in 1996 said they were very interested in the election. About 90% were somewhat or very interested in the election for all the Services. Other populations stayed about the same since the last Presidential election: for non-federally employed overseas citizens, there were 57% who were very interested over 55% in 1996; for federal civilians overseas, the very interested number of 67% compared to 66% in 1996.

Accordingly, there was also a drop in the number of those not interested at all in the 2000 general election. In 2000, 4% of the Uniformed Services (compared to 10% in 1996); 4% of the federal civilians overseas (compared to 5% in 1996); and 2% of the non-federally

employed overseas citizens (compared to 6% in 1996) reported that they were not interested at all in the election. See Chart 1 for the 2000 figures.



Population Characteristics and Voting-The survey requested information about respondents such as age, pay grade (for Uniformed Services), length at current duty station or country and their voting behavior (participation) in the 2000 election. Chart 2 indicates voting participation in 2000 for the Uniformed Services groups surveyed. Voting participation includes those who voted by absentee ballot, those who voted in person, and those who attempted to vote. The total participation is shown using unweighted figures and data weighted to the sample and population.

**TOTAL PARTICIPATION – UNWEIGHTED, WEIGHTED TO THE
SAMPLE, AND WEIGHTED TO THE POPULATION
CHART 2**

Branch of Service	Unweighted Responses	Weighted to the Sample	Weighted to the Population
Army	75.1%	70.9%	65.2%
Navy	76.8%	72.6%	68.4%
Marines	81.4%	73.8%	62.1%
Air Force	83.3%	80.7%	76.4%
Coast Guard	79.0%	76.3%	70.7%
Total	79.1%	74.8%	68.7%

As shown in Chart 3, the overall Uniformed Services voting participation went up five percentage points from 64% in 1996 to 69% in 2000. This is significantly higher (18 percentage points) than that of the general public (51%) in 2000. In fact, since 1984, in Presidential elections, voting participation among the Uniformed Services has consistently exceeded voting by the general public. For federal civilians overseas, responses showed that voting participation decreased in 2000 by three percentage points from 1996 to 65%. Participation remained the same (37%) between 1996 and 2000 for non-federally employed overseas citizens.

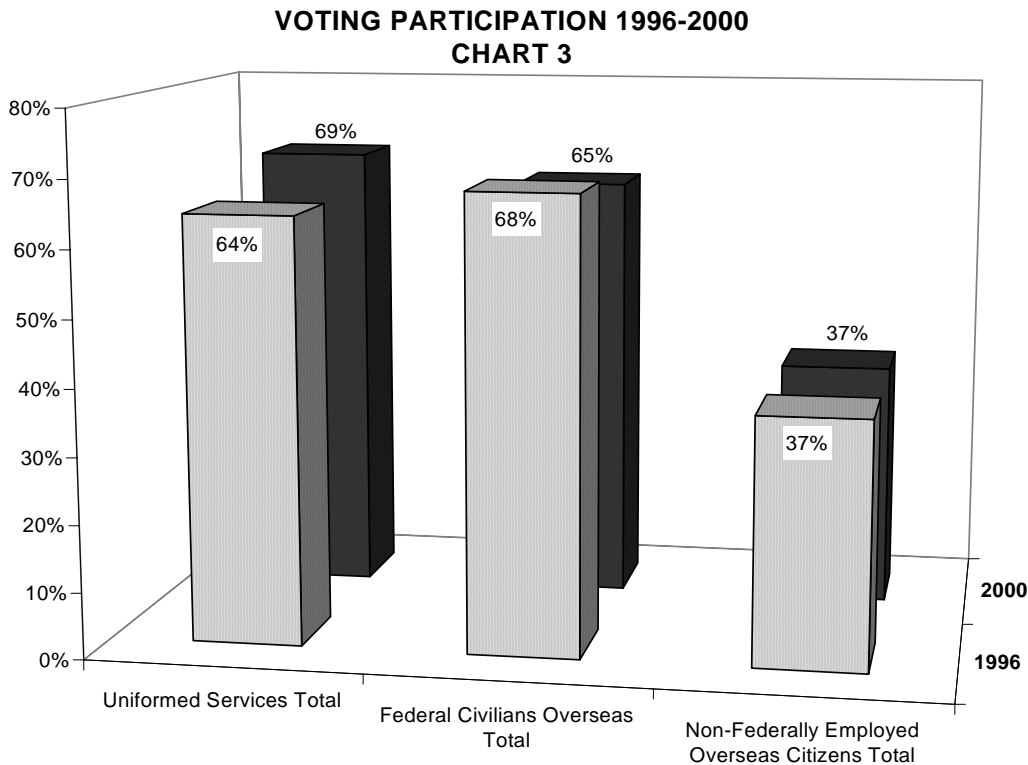
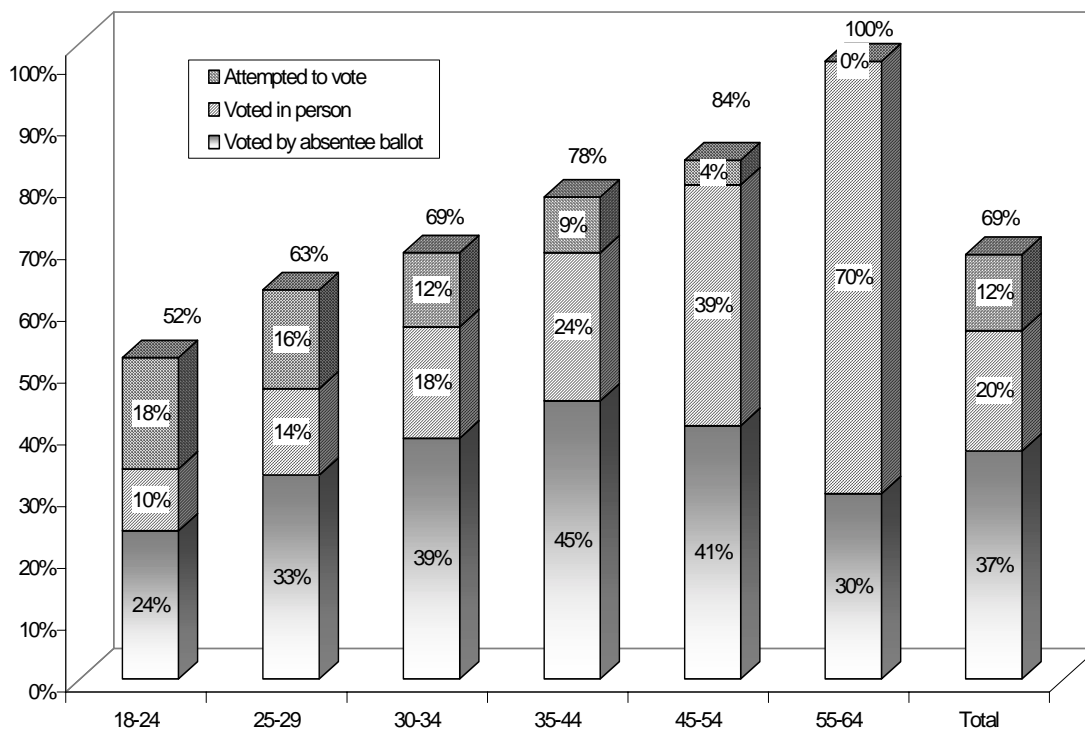


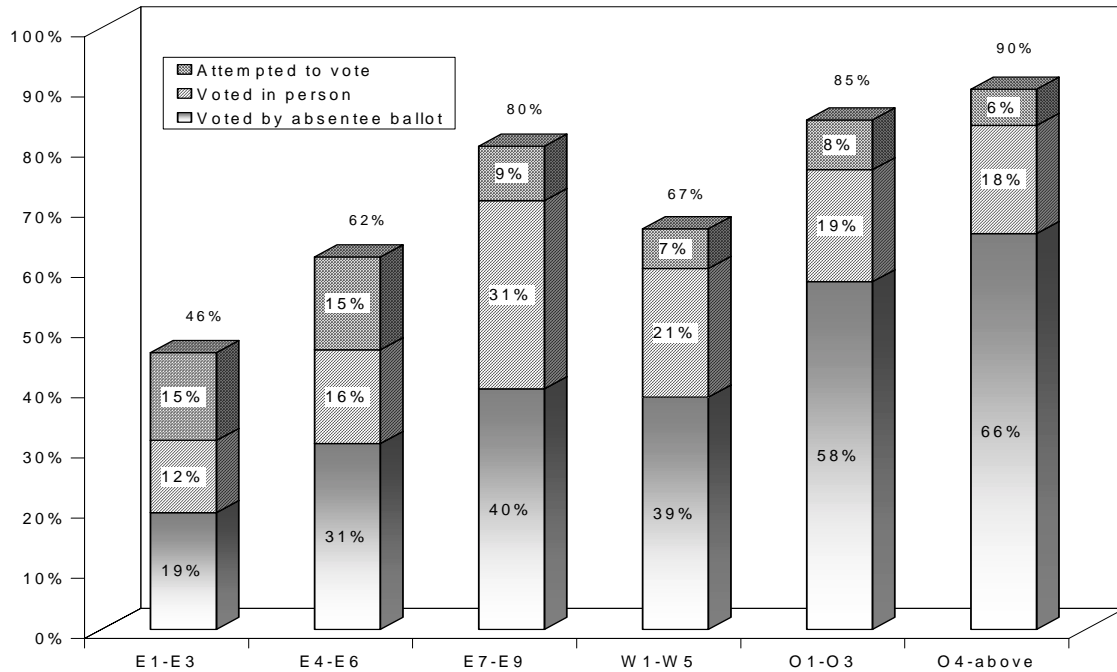
Chart 4 displays the correlation between age and voting in the Uniformed Services. At each age range, the proportion of those voting in person, voting absentee, or attempting to vote, increases progressively from 52% for the 18-24 year-olds to 100% for those 55-64 years old. There was a six percentage point increase over 1996 in the 35-44 age group (78% vs. 72%). The highest participation was in the 45-55 and 55-64 age groups (84% and 100% respectively).

**2000 UNIFORMED SERVICES VOTING PARTICIPATION BY AGE
CHART 4**



Generally, officers in the Uniformed Services are older than enlisted personnel and vote at a higher rate. Thus, we look at rank to confirm whether this is an indicator in accounting for voting participation differences. Rising from 1996 numbers, yet generally following the same pattern, voting participation increased in 2000 progressively from 46% for those in the lowest ranking enlisted pay grades of E1-E3 (42% in 1996) to 80% at the senior enlisted grades (E7-E9) (73% in 1996). The junior officer ranks (O1-O3) participated at a rate of 85% (80% in 1996) and the officer ranks of O-4 and above had the highest participation rate with 90% (87% in 1996). See Chart 5 for the 2000 figures.

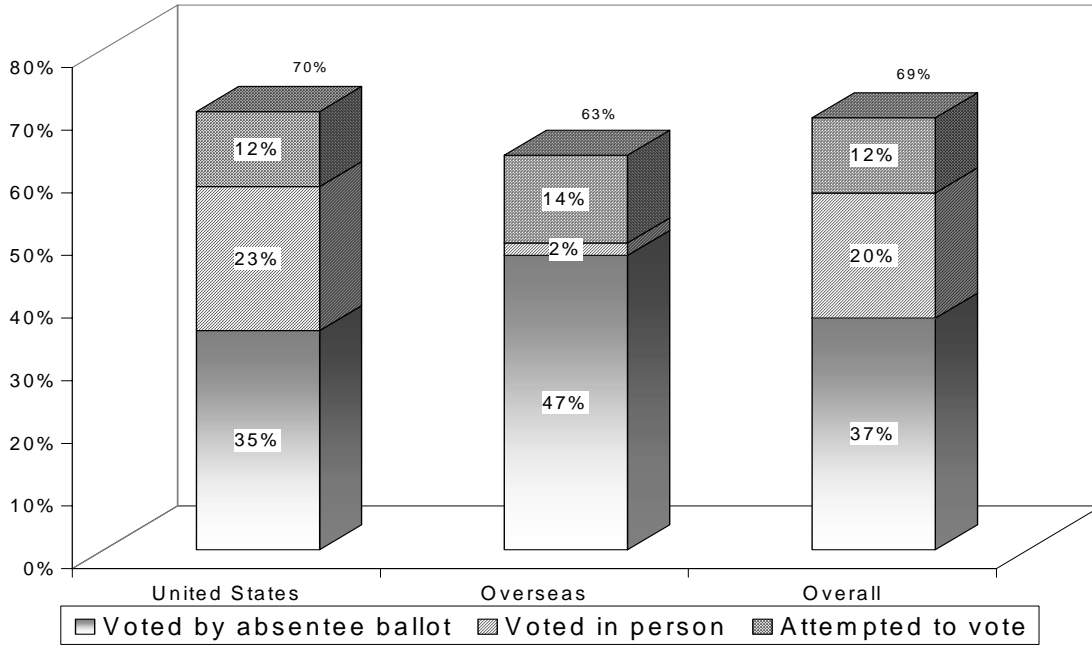
**2000 UNIFORMED SERVICES PARTICIPATION BY PAY GRADE
CHART 5**



In the past there was a tendency for those with a longer duration at a duty station to vote in an election than those who have been assigned to their current duty station for a shorter period. In 2000, voting did not seem to be much affected by the length of time at the present duty station. Voting ranged from between 60% for Uniformed Services members assigned to their duty stations from six months to one year to 74% for more than three years. In fact, those at a duty station less than six months had a voting participation rate of 70%. Chart 6 shows the voting participation between the Uniformed Services members in the U.S. and those assigned overseas. More Uniformed Services members in the U.S. participated than those overseas (70% vs. 63%). Understandably, there was more absentee voting from the Uniformed Services members overseas and more voting in person from the Uniformed Services in the U.S.

Most federal civilian overseas respondents fell within the 45-54 age group. This age group had the highest voting participation with 67% along with the 65+ age group. See Chart 7. The voting participation in 2000 by federal civilians overseas in the 25-29 age group was down considerably from 77% in 1996 to 43% in 2000. Over half (56%) of the federal civilian overseas respondents had lived in their current country for three or more years. However, 95% had lived outside the U.S. for one year or more.

**UNIFORMED SERVICES VOTING PARTICIPATION BY LOCATION
CHART 6**



**FEDERAL CIVILIANS OVERSEAS 2000 PARTICIPATION BY AGE
CHART 7**

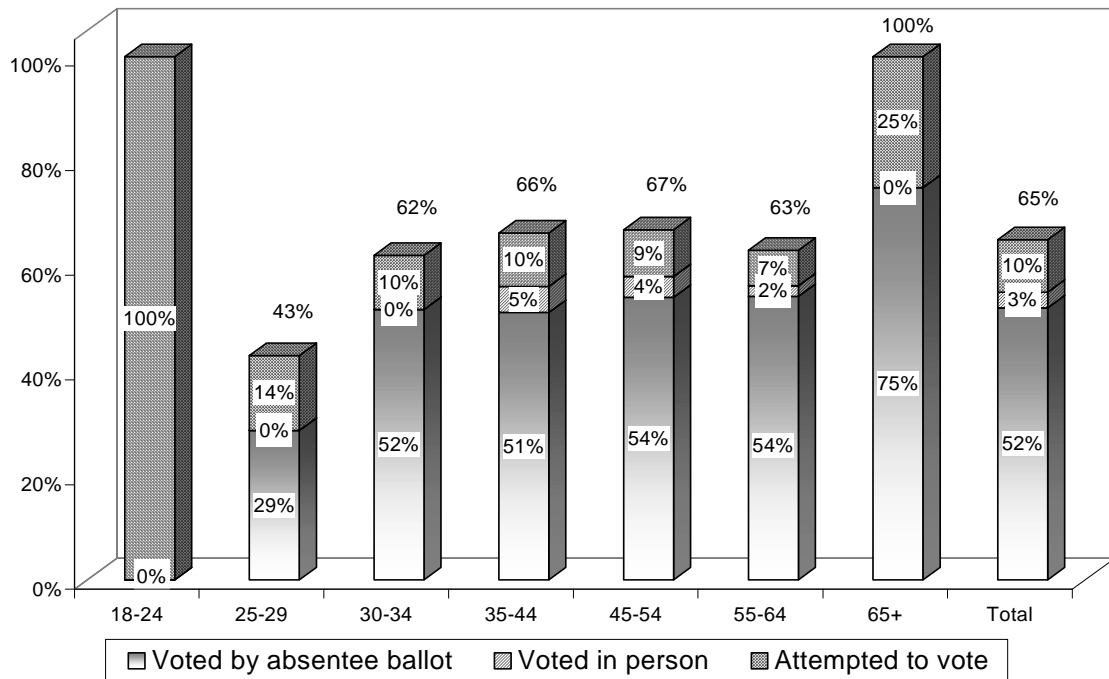
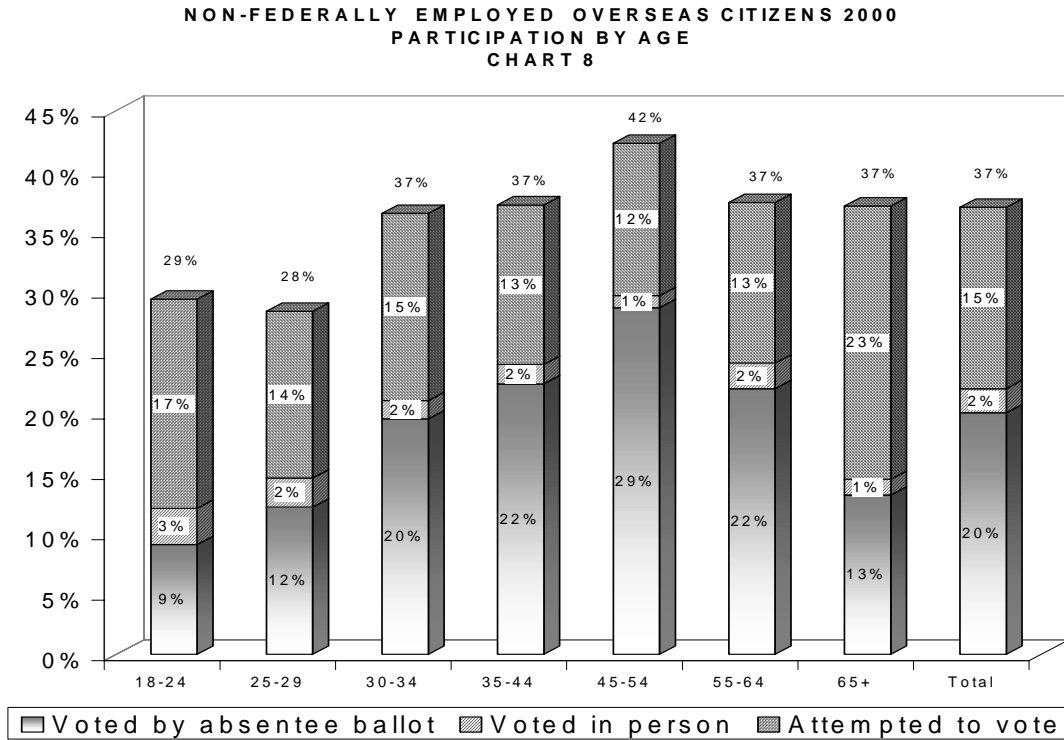


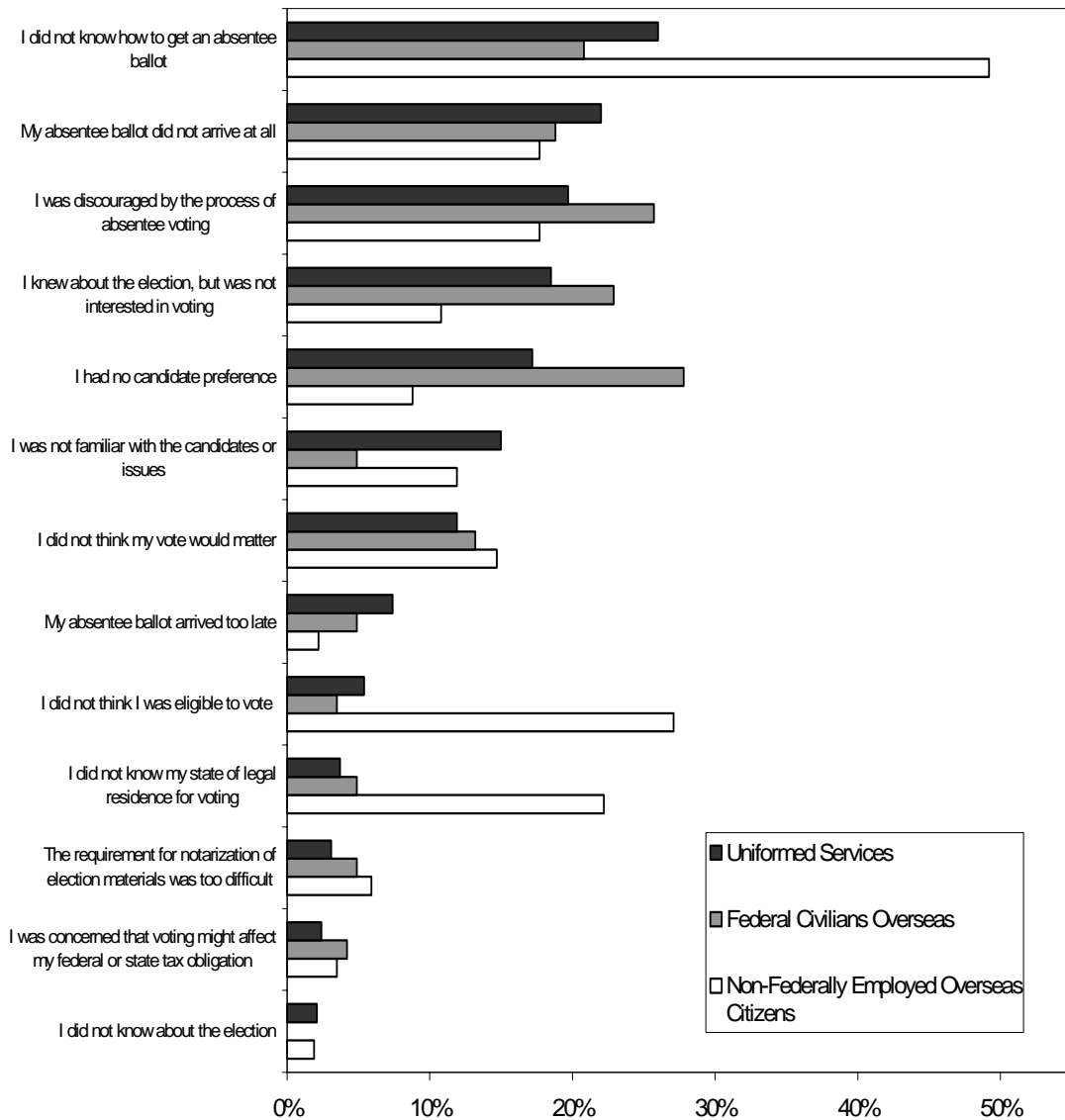
Chart 8 shows that voting participation in 2000 among non-federally employed overseas citizens was highest in the 45-54 age range with 42%. The 18-24 year-old age group rose from 26% in 1996 to 29% in 2000. The vast majority (82%) of non-federally employed overseas citizens had resided in the country where they were currently living for more than three years. Of these, 66% had resided outside the U.S. for more than 10 years.



Reasons for Not Voting-Respondents were asked whether they voted in the November 2000 general election. If they did not vote, they were asked to provide the reasons for not voting. These reasons indicate whether the citizen intends non-participation or if procedural obstacles or lack of information thwarts citizen's desires and attempts to vote.

Chart 9 shows that the most common reason Uniformed Services members did not vote in 2000 was that the voter did not know how to get an absentee ballot (26%). Among federal civilians overseas, the most common reason for not voting was no candidate preference (28%). Like the Uniformed Services, non-federally employed overseas citizens gave the most common reason for not voting as not knowing how to get an absentee ballot (49%).

**REASONS FOR NOT VOTING
CHART 9**

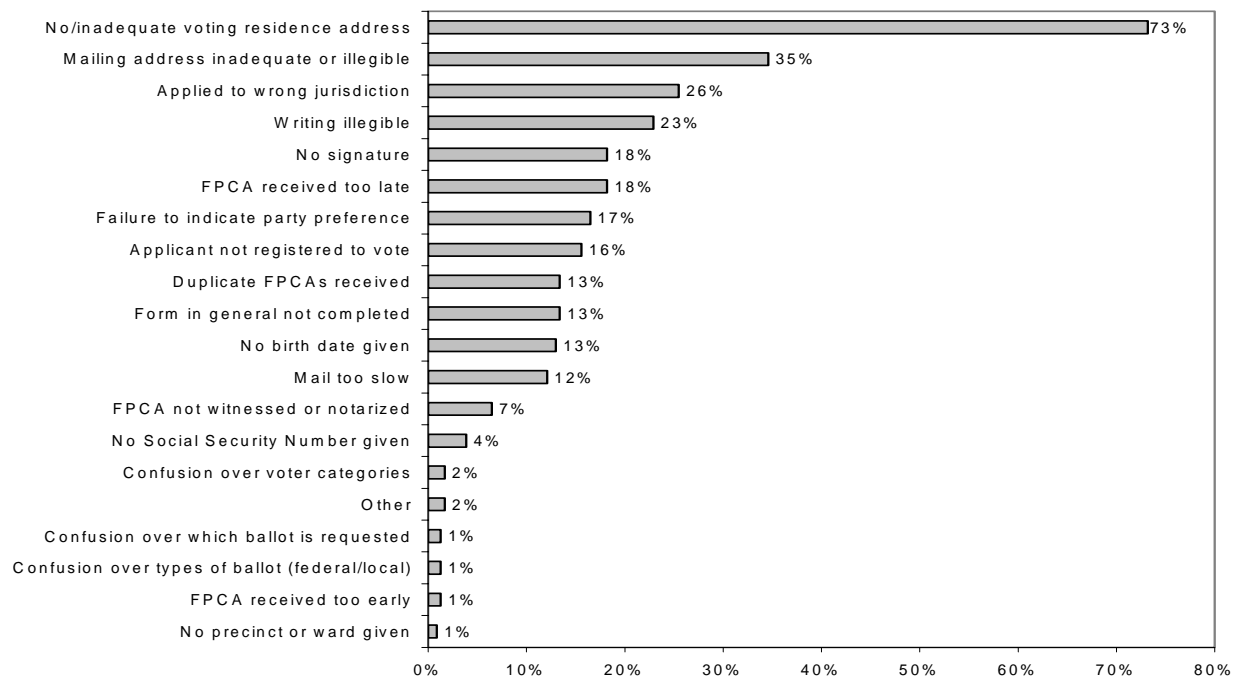


Use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)-The FPCA continued to be the primary method of each population group to register and request an absentee ballot. Of the respondents who requested an absentee ballot, 65% of Uniformed Services members used the form. Most (63%) of the Uniformed Services members acquired the FPCA through Service channels and 19% obtained it directly from FVAP. Among federal civilians overseas, 60% of the respondents who requested an absentee ballot used the FPCA; this was about the same as in 1996 (59%). Of these, 49% obtained the FPCA through Service channels (the same as in 1996), 21% directly from FVAP (a six percentage point increase over 1996) and 10% through the U.S. embassy or consulate (a 21 percentage point decrease from 1996).

Fifty-five percent (a six percentage point decrease from 1996) of the non-federally employed overseas citizen respondents who requested a ballot did so using the FPCA. Of these, 57% (87% in 1996) obtained the FPCA from the U.S. embassy or consulate, 11% from another source like a friend in the U.S., 7% from Democrats or Republicans Abroad, 6% from an election official and 5% directly from FVAP.

Problems Experienced with FPCAs by Local Election Officials (LEOs)-LEOs were asked about the most frequent problems encountered in processing FPCAs submitted by UOCAVA citizens. The top three reasons identified in 1996 are again the top three reasons in 2000. The leading problem continues to be the applicant's inadequate indication of or lack of voting residence address within the local voting jurisdiction at 73% compared to 66% in 1996. The second most cited problem was the applicant's failure to provide an adequate or legible return mailing address at 35% compared to 25% in 1996. The third most listed problem was the applicant's applying to the wrong jurisdiction at 26%, up from 20% in 1996. Other problems as shown in Chart 10 are illegible handwriting and no signature.

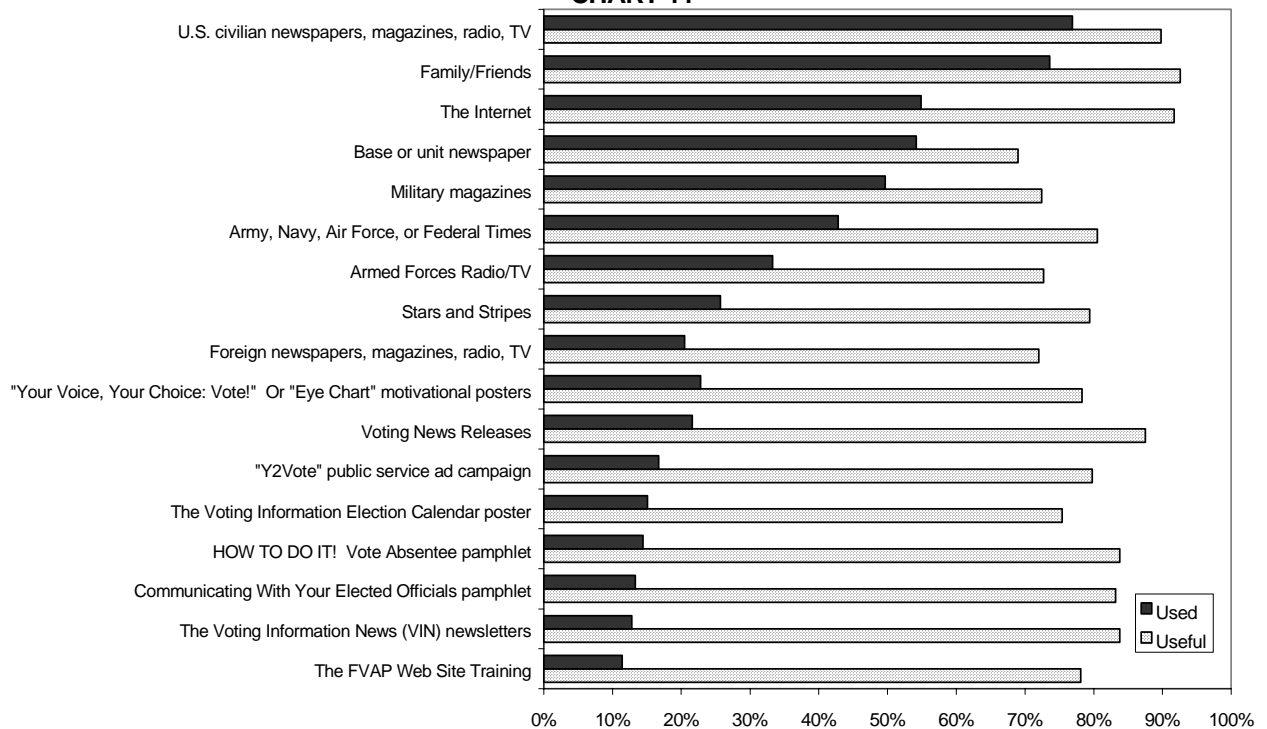
**PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN PROCESSING FPCAs
BY LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS
CHART 10**



Sources of Voting Information and Assistance-The survey asked about various sources of voting information citizens consulted to assist them in participating in the electoral process including Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs), the *Voting Assistance Guide*, FVAP's web site, and various other sources of information. It also asked about their overall satisfaction with the assistance received.

For Uniformed Services members, 38% (42% in 1996) reported that they received voting information or assistance from a Uniformed Services VAO and 74% across all Services were satisfied with the quality of assistance given by the VAO. The primary kind of assistance received was obtaining the FPCA. Of those Uniformed Services members who used the *Voting Assistance Guide* in 2000, 91% rated it as a good or excellent source of assistance. Only 7% of Uniformed Services respondents used the FVAP web site during 2000. The main reason for not using it was that they did not know about it. Of those who used it, 70% were somewhat or very satisfied. Seventy-seven percent of the Uniformed Services members indicated that they used U.S. civilian newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV as their most common media sources of voting information. This was followed closely by family and friends (74%). Among other FVAP publications, the motivational posters and Voting News Releases were the most used by Uniformed Services members and the most useful were Voting News Releases, *How to Do It! Vote Absentee* pamphlet, and the *Voting Information News (VIN)* newsletter. These and other sources of FVAP outreach and media voting information are provided in Chart 11.

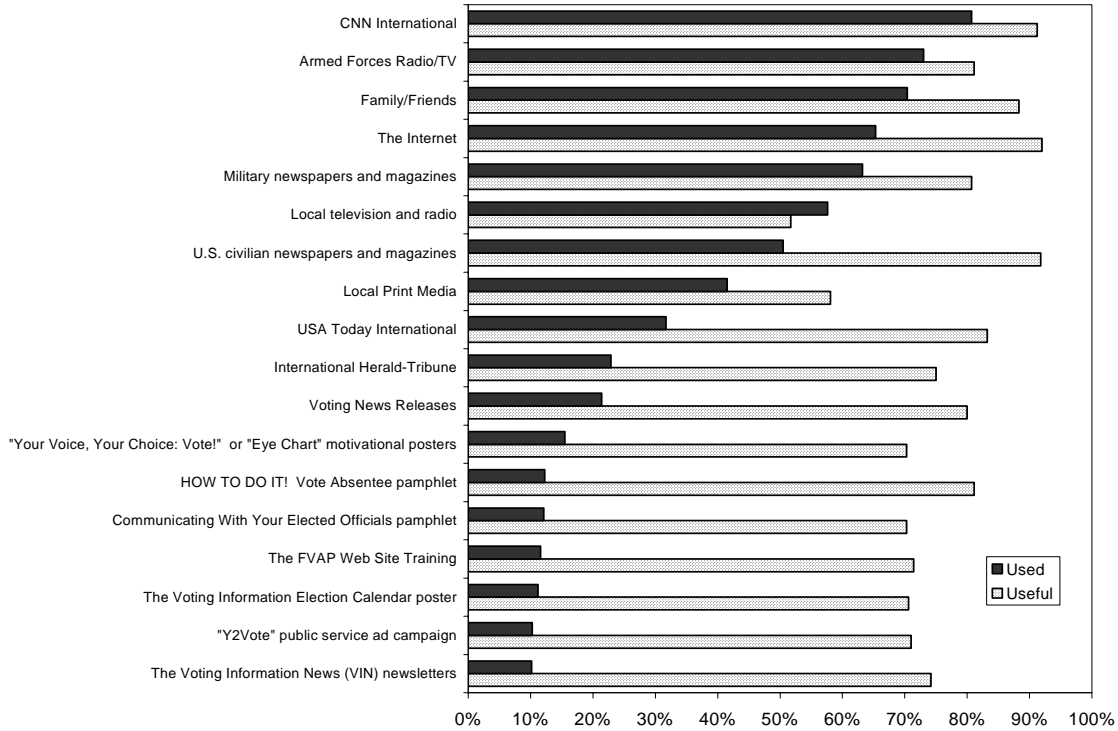
**SOURCES OF VOTING INFORMATION
UNIFORMED SERVICES PERSONNEL
CHART 11**



For federal civilians overseas, the Agency VAO was the most used for voter assistance. Seventy-two percent of those who contacted a VAO were somewhat or very satisfied with the assistance provided. The main assistance provided was to obtain the FPCA. Of the federal civilians overseas using the *Voting Assistance Guide* in 2000, 90% rated it as a good or excellent source of assistance. Eighty-one percent of the federal civilians overseas indicated that they used CNN International as their most common media voting

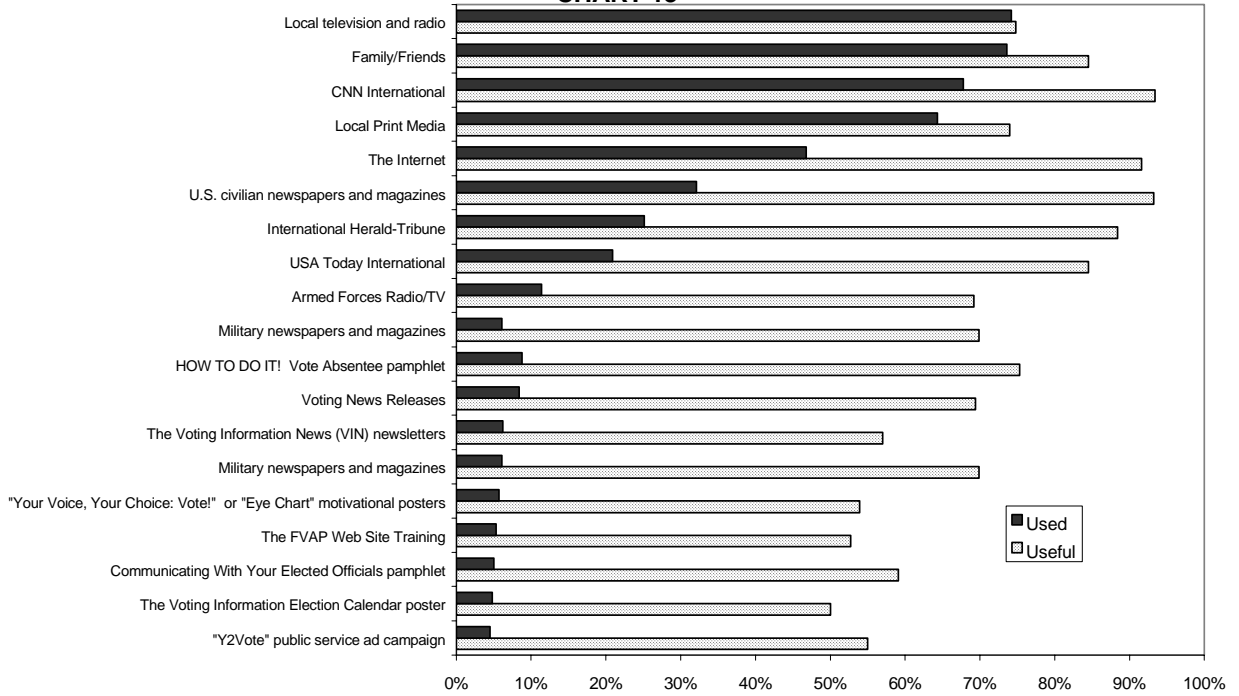
information source. It was also the most useful. Federal civilians overseas used FVAP Voting News Releases most often and found the *How to Do It! Vote Absentee* pamphlet followed by Voting News Releases and the *VIN* the most useful FVAP sources. See Chart 12 for additional sources of FVAP and media voting information used by federal civilians overseas.

**2000 SOURCES OF INFORMATION
FEDERAL CIVILIANS OVERSEAS
CHART 12**

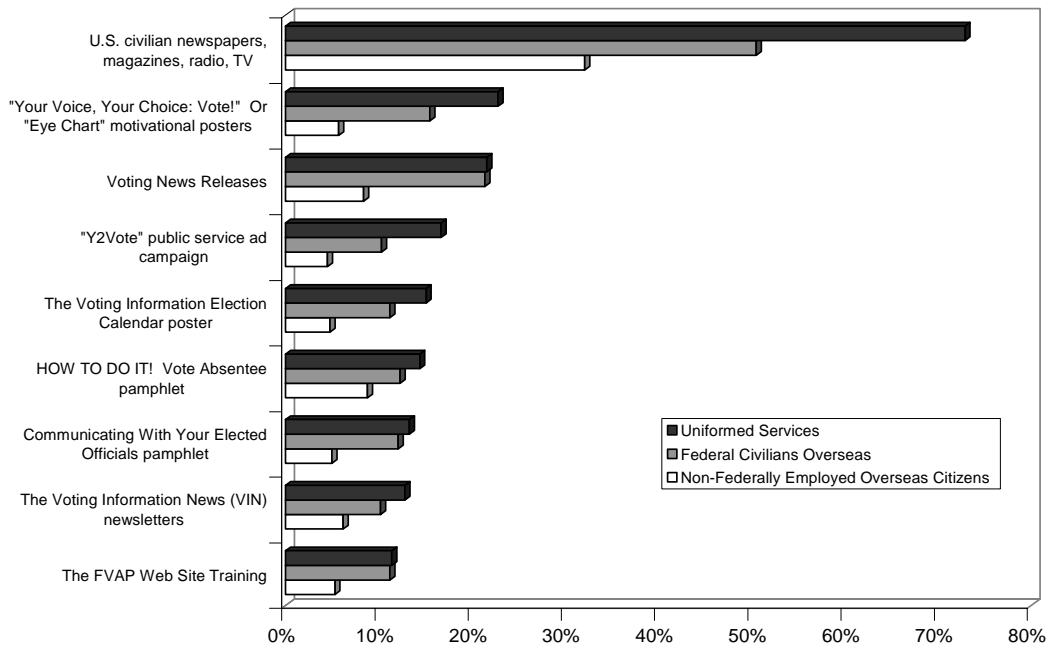


For non-federally employed overseas citizens, U.S. embassy and consulate VAOs are the primary source of assistance and information about absentee voting. In 2000, 63% of those using the U.S. embassy and consulate VAOs were somewhat or very satisfied with the information/assistance they received. Seventy-four percent of those who used the *Voting Assistance Guide* rated it as a good or excellent source of information. Local television and radio, and family and friends were their most common media sources for information used on voting in the 2000 general election (both 74%). The most useful were CNN International and U.S. civilian newspapers and magazines. For non-federally employed overseas citizens, the *How to Do It! Vote Absentee* pamphlet was the most used and useful FVAP source. Chart 13 provides additional sources of FVAP and media voting information used by non-federally employed overseas citizens. Chart 14 shows a comparison of the media and FVAP outreach materials used by Uniformed Services members, federal civilians overseas, and non-federally employed overseas citizens.

**2000 SOURCES OF INFORMATION
NON-FEDERALLY EMPLOYED OVERSEAS CITIZENS
CHART 13**



**SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED
CHART 14**



The five surveyed communities rated FVAP's *VIN* for its usefulness. In 2000 as in 1996, of those who received the *VIN*, the highest degree of usefulness was by those providing voting assistance or processing absentee voting requests. Of those who used the *VIN*, 97% of the Uniformed Services VAOs and 85% of the LEOs found it useful. Eighty-four percent of the Uniformed Services members, 74% of the federal civilians overseas, and 57% of the non-federally employed overseas citizens found the *VIN* useful.

Transit Time-Insufficient ballot transit time is a primary cause of disenfranchisement for absentee voters covered by the *UOCAVA*. As described in the "Progress Working With States" portion of this report, a transit time of 40-45 days is desired in order for an absentee voter to request the ballot, vote it and return it in time to be counted. Accordingly, we encourage citizens to submit applications for an absentee ballot early in the calendar year. We also recommend that state and local government officials mail out absentee ballots as early as possible to citizens who have requested them in order to allow sufficient time for ballot transit.

For Uniformed Services member respondents who submitted absentee ballot requests, 66% did so before October. Seventy-eight percent of the federal civilians overseas, and 66% of the non-federally employed overseas citizens who submitted requests for absentee ballots did so before October.

Most of the Uniformed Services members, federal civilians overseas, and non-federally employed overseas citizens received their absentee ballots during October (65%, 62% and 69% respectively). Prior to October, 18% of Uniformed Services members had received their absentee ballots. For federal civilians overseas, 24% received their absentee ballots by the end of September. Among non-federally employed overseas citizens, 13% received their absentee ballots by the end of September.

Nine percent of Uniformed Services members received their ballot in November. Twelve percent of the non-federally employed overseas citizens and 7% of the federal civilian overseas employees received their ballots during November.

Prior to November, of those who received an absentee ballot, 76% of Uniformed Services members, 70% of non-federally employed overseas citizens and 84% of federal civilians overseas had returned their absentee ballots to their LEO. Sixty-six percent of Uniformed Services members, 64% of non-federally employed overseas citizens and 74% of federal civilians overseas returned their absentee ballots in October.

Electronic Transmission-Forty-four states, three territories and the District of Columbia allow electronic transmission of voting materials. *UOCAVA* citizens, as allowed, may electronically transmit the FPCA and the voted ballot. LEOs, as allowed, fax blank ballots to *UOCAVA* citizens. The FVAP Electronic Transmission Service (in use since Operation Desert Shield/Storm in 1990) facilitated this process. Faxing is often the last resort a citizen has when faced with circumstances that would otherwise lead to his or her disenfranchisement.

During the 2000 Presidential election, of those Uniformed Services members who used faxing, 56% faxed the FPCA and 5% faxed their voted state ballot. Five percent transmitted their voted Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Ninety percent of the Uniformed Services members who used the service found it very or somewhat easy to fax election materials (up from 84% in 1996).

Of the federal civilians overseas who faxed materials, 33% transmitted FPCAs. This population faxed no voted state ballots and 8% transmitted their voted FWABs. Eighty percent found it very or somewhat easy to fax election materials compared to 77% in 1996.

Of the non-federally employed overseas citizens who electronically transmitted election materials, 47% faxed the FPCA and 15% electronically transmitted their voted state ballot. Fourteen percent (up from 3% in 1996) transmitted their voted FWAB. Unlike 1996 where 84% reported ease of electronic transmission, 63% of these overseas citizens reported that faxing of election materials was easy in the 2000 general election.

Of the LEOs queried, 76% accepted electronically transmitted FPCA requests for absentee ballots in the 2000 general election. Of those, 72% received faxed FPCAs from Uniformed Services members in the U.S.; 52% received faxed FPCAs from Uniformed Services members overseas; and 41% received faxed FPCAs from overseas civilians. Eighteen percent of LEOs faxed blank absentee ballots to *UOCAVA* citizens in the 2000 general election. Of these, 22% of LEOs sent them to Uniformed Services members in the U.S.; 15% sent them to Uniformed Services members overseas; and 22% transmitted them to overseas civilians. Thirteen percent accepted faxed voted ballots. Of these, 20% of LEOs received them from the Uniformed Services members in the U.S.; 19% received faxed ballots from the Uniformed Services overseas; and 21% received them from overseas citizens. Fifty-two percent of LEOs said it took three days or less for the faxed absentee ballot to be returned. Seventy-seven percent responded that it took seven days or less for the average round-trip transit time for electronically transmitted absentee ballots.

In 2000, 21% of Uniformed Services VAOs helped voters fax election materials. Of these, 84% helped transmit the FPCA electronically; 14% helped transmit the blank absentee ballot electronically; 16% helped transmit the voted absentee ballot electronically, and 10% helped send other election materials by fax.

Of those Uniformed Services VAOs assisting *UOCAVA* voters with faxing, few had difficulty with the transmission process. Ninety-three percent had no problem transmitting materials and 97% had no difficulty receiving legible copies of election materials.

1998 Election- In the 2000 survey, to obtain information on voter participation in a non-Presidential election year, FVAP asked whether the survey participant voted in 1998. The results are as follows: Uniformed Services members, 18% voted in person and 22% voted absentee; non-federally employed overseas citizens, 8% voted in person and 9%

voted by absentee ballot; and federal civilians overseas, 18% voted in person and 33% voted absentee.

Summary-In 2000, Uniformed Services members' voting participation was higher than in any past Presidential election. It exceeded the participation of the general public, as did the participation for federal civilians overseas.

There was improvement in voting participation among younger Uniformed Services voters in 2000 in the 25-29 year old group. All age groups increased their participation in 2000.

The high rate of voting for those Uniformed Services members at a duty station less than six months may be the result of installation voting assistance and orientation programs for newcomers.

The high voter participation may be attributed to an effective voter information and education program with proper command and agency emphasis on the voting program by each of the Services and the states' progress in simplifying their absentee voting procedures.

Voting participation for all populations (Uniformed Services, federal civilians overseas, and non-federally employed overseas citizens) tends to be among the highest beginning in the 45-54 age group.

The decrease in use of the card stock FPCA may be the result of more variety of ways to obtain the FPCA in 2000 for overseas citizens than ever before, e.g., FVAP's on-line FPCA, e-mail request or letter to the LEO.

The fact that most blank ballots were received by citizens in October validates the need for the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) in order to provide overseas voters with a back-up ballot that allows them to vote in the general election.

VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS

Department of Defense Directive 1000.4 addresses the need for Component Heads to appoint Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) at every level of command. Further, every U.S. embassy and consulate has a VAO, generally in the American Citizen Services Section. The VAO's responsibilities include providing accurate procedural information and assistance to citizens who wish to register and vote. VAOs play a pivotal role in assisting citizens covered by the *UOCAVA* to exercise fully their right to vote.

Uniformed Services VAOs

In 2000, 43% of VAOs in the Uniformed Services were junior officers. Overall, enlisted personnel account for approximately 46% of the VAOs. The majority (64%) of VAOs were age 30 or older. The previous figures have remained constant since 1996. Over 70% of VAOs had been located at their present duty station for one year or more. However, only 21% had served as a VAO for one year or more in their current term. Frequent changes of duty assignment or station are contributing factors to the lack of continuity in voting assistance efforts. Further, only eighteen percent of VAOs had served previously in this capacity. This is a drop from 22% in 1996. However, 73% of this core of VAOs had from one to over three years or more VAO experience.

The most common types of training received by VAOs were a FVAP on-site voting workshop and an informal briefing. Of the 69% who attended FVAP voting workshops, 96% rated them as useful. Sixty-seven percent received informal briefings, 56% used FVAP web site training, and 53% attended installation workshop training.

The most fundamental resource available to VAOs is the FVAP *Voting Assistance Guide (Guide)*. Eighty-six percent of the VAOs received the *Guide*, which began distribution in November 1999. Of those receiving the *Guide*, 99% rated it as useful. This is the same rating as in 1996.

Almost 50% of VAOs received the FVAP *Voting Information News (VIN)* newsletter. Ninety-seven percent of VAOs found it useful. As another source of voting information, 61% responded that they used the FVAP web site with a 98% satisfaction rate. Among other sources of voting information used, the top sources were the FVAP motivational posters, the FVAP election calendar poster, FVAP *How to Do It! Vote Absentee* pamphlet, and FVAP Voting News Releases.

In 2000, 80% of VAOs reported that they were asked most often to provide the FPCA to applicants. Sixty-eight percent provided assistance in filling out the FPCA. The most common VAO activity was answering individual voting questions (89%) and displaying voting information materials (73%).

When asked about complaints received from absentee voters they assisted, 81% of VAOs had no complaints. Of the 19% of the Uniformed Services VAO respondents who did get complaints, the most frequently mentioned ones were no response from local election

officials (LEOs) to the FPCA (52%), no way to know if LEOs received the FPCA (41%), and a delay in receiving a response to the FPCA from the LEO (32%).

LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS

Local election officials (LEOs) are the individuals who administer an election on the local level in counties, cities, townships and other jurisdictions within the U.S. FVAP surveyed these officials in 2000 regarding their experience with the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process, its level of success and recommendations for further improvements.

Among the sampled jurisdictions, 14% of the LEOs reported that Uniformed Services absentee voters in the U.S cast 500 or more votes in the 2000 general election. Seven percent reported that they received 500 or more votes from Uniformed Services absentee voters overseas and 4% reported that they received 500 or more votes from overseas civilians. Ninety-five percent of LEOs reported one or more Uniformed Services member in the U.S. cast an absentee ballot, 90% of LEOs reported one or more Uniformed Services member overseas cast an absentee ballot, and 92% reported receiving absentee ballots from one or more overseas civilian in 2000.

As discussed under “Program Results,” lack of adequate ballot transit time is a cause of disenfranchisement among absentee voters. A transit time of 40-45 days is desirable in order for an absentee voter to apply for a ballot, vote it and return it in time to be counted. FVAP asked LEOs when they first mailed absentee ballots to *UOCAVA* citizens. In 2000, 29% began mailing absentee ballots on or before September 25th (September 23rd was the 45th day before the election), while 78% mailed absentee ballots by October 9th (29 days before the election).

Most LEO respondents mailed from 1-400 absentee ballots: 71% to Uniformed Services in the U.S., 81% to Uniformed Services overseas, and 84% to overseas civilians. Very few of these were returned undeliverable. Almost 20% reported no absentee ballots were returned undelivered, while 75% had up to 5% returned. More than 80% of LEOs reported that less than 10 absentee ballots were returned undelivered from Uniformed Services members in the U.S. and over 90% reported that less than 10 absentee ballots were returned undelivered from Uniformed Services overseas and overseas civilians.

Most LEOs (68%) said that 5% or less of the absentee ballots they mailed were received too late to be counted. Sixty-eight percent of the LEO respondents reported that 0-9 absentee ballots arrived from the Uniformed Services members in the U.S. too late to be counted, 83% reported that 0-9 absentee ballots from Uniformed Services overseas arrived too late for counting, and 85% reported that 0-9 absentee ballots arrived too late for counting from overseas civilians.

Sixty-seven percent of the LEO respondents counted FWABs from one or more of the Uniformed Services members overseas and 38% counted them from one or more overseas civilian.

The top three problems that the most LEOs reported when processing FPCAs were no or inadequate voting residence address, inadequate or illegible mailing addresses, or the voter applied to the wrong jurisdiction.

Seventy-six percent of LEO respondents accepted faxed FPCA requests for absentee ballots. Eighteen percent faxed blank absentee ballots to the voter. Thirteen percent accepted the voted ballot by fax. In over 50% of the cases, it took three days or less for the voter to return the faxed absentee ballot to the LEO. The majority of officials had easy access to a fax machine (97%).

Regarding voting assistance from the FVAP to LEOs, 44% of LEO respondents referred to the *Voting Assistance Guide (Guide)*, 27% used the toll-free telephone (ombudsman) service, and 18% received the *Voting Information News* newsletter. Almost three-quarters of those who referred to the *Guide* obtained it directly from FVAP. Eighty-eight percent of LEOs were satisfied with the assistance the FVAP Ombudsman Service provided them in administering elections for citizens covered by the *UOCAVA*. This represents a three percentage point increase in the satisfaction rate over 1996. Eighty-five percent were satisfied with the newsletter.