



U.S. Army Central Voting Update 1 June 2009



Voting News

Personnel presently assigned/attached in the AOR can order forms through the following office: Army in Europe Publications System (AEPUBS)

Customer.Service.AEPUBS@EUR.army.mil

Voting Assistance Officers

The Voting Action Plan and Voting Action Information Support Plan have been are available at:

www.fvap.gov/laws/votingactionplan.html
<http://www.fvap.gov/resource/media/votingactionplan2008-09.pdf>

Web Sites of Interest

Absentee Voting Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/faq.html>

How to Order Voting Materials

<http://www.vote@fvap.ncr.gov>

On-line Federal Post Card Application

<http://www.fvap.gov/for-voting-assistance-officers/forms.html>

Note: IMPORTANT: Voting Assistance Officers are reminded that they are performing duties in an official capacity and are obliged to protect the integrity of the electoral process and the confidentiality of the voter and his/her vote.

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**Only 535
days until
the
Election!**

Voting Assistance Officers "To Do" This Month:

- Ensure that citizens you assist have submitted new FPCAs to their local election officials if they have recently changed their mailing address or are residents of a state holding elections this year.
- Plan to attend an FVAP workshop in Fiscal Year 2010 to ensure you are properly trained to provide assistance to your citizens.
- Make sure your organization's budget provides funding for voting materials such as FPCAs and FWABs, and travel to an FVAP workshop, if required. Ensure that you have adequate supplies of these items on-hand and order additional stock, if necessary.
- Whether your continuity file is in a binder, a folder, cabinet, or online, ensure it is accessible to others (your assistant, successor, supervisor, Installation VAO, Inspector General, etc.), especially if it is in electronic format .

Winning Slogans Selected for the 2009 Voting Slogan Contest

The Federal Voting Assistance Program is pleased to announce the winning slogans of its biennial Voting Slogan Contest. These slogans will be used to promote participation in the democratic process among citizens covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act -- members of the Uniformed Services, the Merchant Marine, their families, and all U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

This year, the department received more than 1,600 slogans from all branches of the Uniformed Services, the State Department, local election officials and citizens living around the world. A panel of judges which included Members of the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and Service Voting Action Officers was asked to rank their top selections based on originality and motivational value. These slogans will be part of the FVAP's 2010-2011 outreach campaign which focuses on increasing voter awareness among U.S. citizens worldwide and will be featured in the 2010-2011 *Voting Assistance Guide*, on motivational posters, and other FVAP publications.

The winning entries in the contest were:

"Honor the past, support the future - vote!"- 1st Place by Andrea K. Bristol, USA.

"Vote Today for Tomorrow's Future"- 2nd Place by James R. Hopkins Jr., USN.

"Never too far away to have your say! VOTE!"- 3rd Place by Jill E. Pigo, USN.

"Don't just protect the right to vote, use it!"- 4th Place by GySgt Michael D. Travers, USMC.

Receiving Honorable Mention were:

"Be a part of history: Vote!"- LT Laura Reeves, USN.

"Citizenship reaches around the world, Vote!"- John Tuteur, Napa County Registrar of Voters

"Be Informed. Be Involved. Be a Voter!"- Rob Rock, Rhode Island's Office Secretary of State

"Have a say in the USA-VOTE"- James E. Kramer, USAF.

Voting Information News

What is the *Voting Information News*?

Voting Information News (VIN) is a monthly newsletter that contains information on upcoming elections, a "To Do" list for Voting Assistance Officers, and other essential material to help promote election information and the enfranchisement of citizens. The VIN is also available by email or regular mail.

To be added to our mailing list, contact the FVAP at vote@fvap.ncr.gov. Please provide your full name and mailing address in the body of the email message and request that the VIN be delivered to you by email, standard mail, or both.

Overseas Civilian Citizens

An online version of the FWAB is available at the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefwab.html. The online version must be completed, printed, signed, dated, and mailed to your Local Election Official. The online form must be mailed in an envelope with proper postage, or using our prepaid [return envelope](#). Refer to [Chapter 3](#) of the *Guide* to determine your state or territory's witness or notary requirements for voted

ballots. Return the voted FWAB to the local election official to meet the state or territorial deadline for counting.

Additionally, eleven states have expanded the use of the FWAB: Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Refer to Chapter 3 of the Guide for details.

Where would I obtain information on issues, positions and candidates?

In addition to reading U.S. news magazines and newspapers, both Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad maintain overseas offices and have information about the candidates and issues. Alternatively, the party organizations can be contacted as follows:

Information about candidates, issues, and local news are available on the Internet. Armed Forces Radio and Television Service broadcasts American news and entertainment programs throughout the world. Alternatively, subscribe to hometown newspapers, or contact friends and relatives for information on state and local issues.

This web site provides absentee voting information to US citizens who are [UOCAVA](#) citizens.

UOCAVA citizens are U.S. citizens who are members of the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard), merchant marine, commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, their family members, and citizens outside the United States.

If you have questions about the *UOCAVA* voting process, please

check out our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). If you are not a [UOCAVA](#) citizen, and wish to vote absentee as a regular state voter, please go to [State Election Sites](#). If you wish to vote in person, please contact your local election official (listed in the Government Pages of the telephone book).

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STATES

CALIFORNIA TO HOLD A SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION ON MAY 19, 2009, FOR CANDIDATES FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE 32nd DISTRICT

On Tuesday, May 19, 2009, there will be a special primary election in the 32nd Congressional District of California to determine the political parties' candidates to appear on the ballot for a special general election to be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2009, to fill the seat vacated by Representative Hilda Solis. If one candidate receives a majority of the votes (50% + 1) in the special primary election, no special general election will be held. To determine if your legal residence is in the 32nd Congressional District, click on www.fvap.gov/reference/about-elect-officials/index.html and then on "United States House of Representatives."

Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) should contact those citizens who are California voters and inform them of this

news release and assist them in requesting and returning their absentee ballot.

REGISTERING TO VOTE AND REQUESTING A BALLOT:

All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are California residents within the 32nd District should request a ballot for this special election by completing and submitting a registration and ballot request, Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), SF-76, by May 12, 2009, if you have not done so already in calendar year 2009. The online version of the FPCA is available from the FVAP website by clicking on the appropriate citizen at www.fvap.gov. The FPCA may be submitted by fax or email in addition to regular mail. To send the FPCA directly by fax or email send to:
Los Angeles County Fax: (562) 929-4790
Email:
militaryoverseasav@rrcc.lacounty.gov

Your county elections official must receive the request for an absentee ballot not later than Tuesday, May 12, 2009.

Voters who are California residents within the 32nd District, who requested and received a ballot for the federal General Election on November 4, 2008, will automatically receive a special election ballot, and need not take any further action.

California law allows members of the U.S. Uniformed Services and their family members to send the FPCA for registration and ballot request by fax. After faxing, submit the original FPCA by mail. The faxed FPCA should include a Transmittal Cover Sheet, which may be found at

www.fvap.gov/resources/media/coversheet.pdf.

By fax: To send directly to your election office, send to: Los Angeles County Fax: (562) 929-4790 or use the following **toll-free fax numbers** through FVAP for the U.S. and Canada: 1-800-368-8683, (703) 693-5527 or DSN 223-5527 (military).

At www.fvap.gov/contact/toll-free-fax/index.html, there is a list of additional toll-free fax numbers from overseas countries.

RETURNING YOUR BALLOT:

California allows overseas Uniformed Service Members and overseas citizens to return ballots by mail or fax, so long as they sign an oath to acknowledge they are waiving their right to cast their ballots secretly. If returning the marked ballot by fax, you must complete and sign the Transmittal Cover Sheet found at www.fvap.gov/resources/media/coversheet.pdf. When returned, your ballot will be counted if it is returned by close of polls on May 19, 2009.

The National Voter Registration Act

The *National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)* of 1993, requires that individuals be given the opportunity to register to vote or to change their voter registration data when applying for or receiving services or assistance at any office designated as a voter registration agency. The entire law is available: [NVRA Law](#) (Opens in a new window and requires Adobe Reader 7).

Department of Defense Directive 1344.13, Implementation of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

The Secretary of Defense is designated to develop and implement, jointly with each State, procedures for persons to apply to register to vote at recruitment offices of the Armed Forces.

To view the directive in its entirety, go to [NVRA Directive](#) (Opens in a new window and requires Adobe Reader 7).

About Elections and Officials

Federal Elections and Offices

There are 542 Federal offices: President, Vice President, 100 U.S. Senators (two from each state), 435 U.S. Representatives, four delegates to the House of Representatives from U.S. territories and the District of Columbia, and one Resident Commissioner from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

U.S. Senators serve six-year terms, with one-third of them up for election every even-numbered year. U.S. Representatives serve two-year terms, with the entire House up for election every even-numbered year.

To find out who your U.S. Senator or Representative is and how to contact them:

[United States Senate](#)

[United States House of
Representatives](#)

State and Local Elections and Officials

State Officials

In most states, state offices include: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General, State Supreme Court Justices, Comptroller, Treasurer, State Senators and State Legislators. These officials are elected by the voters of the districts they serve.

Many states hold referenda to submit legislative matters to the voters for approval or rejection. Other matters that may appear on state ballots include bond initiatives, amendments to the state constitution and recalls of state elected officials.

Local Elections and Officials

Local officials make up the vast majority of elected officials in the U.S. These officials include mayor, town or city council members, county commissioner, etc. The number and titles of elected local officials vary.

Key Election Terms

Affidavit—sworn statement in writing usually made under oath or affirmation, before an authorized officer, notary, or court official.

Congressional District—division of a state, based on population, electing one member to the U. S. House of Representatives.

Electoral Vote—votes cast for President and Vice President by presidential electors. When a citizen votes for a presidential candidate, the ballot is cast for the group of presidential electors associated with that candidate in that state.

Elector—a qualified voter. Also used for the 538 members of the Electoral College.

Federal Ballot—ballot listing only candidates for Federal offices.

Federal Post Card Application (SF- 76)—simultaneous voter registration/absentee ballot request form used by U. S. citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (UOCAVA).

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (SF- 186)—back-up Federal ballot used by UOCAVA citizens to write in their choices for candidates for Federal offices in the general election if they have requested but not received their state ballot.

General Election—election held to choose among previously nominated candidates for Federal, state and local offices.

Municipal Election—election held in a city or town to vote for local officials or on questions of local interest.

Plurality—the difference in the number of votes cast for the two candidates receiving the most votes.

Popular Vote—number of votes cast by the people, as distinguished from the electoral vote.

Primary Election—election held to nominate a political party's candidates for the general election.

Closed Primary—primary in which voters must declare their political party affiliation and choose a candidate from that party's ballot.

Open Primary—primary in which voters may vote for the

candidates of any party listed on the ballot.

Runoff—election held in some states if no candidate receives a specified percentage of the vote in the general election.

Political Activities by the Uniformed Services and Federal Employees

DoD Directive 1344.10

This directive contains the DoD policies on political activities of members of the Armed Forces on active duty.

To view the directive in its entirety, go to [DoD Directive 1344.10](#) (Opens in a new window and requires Adobe Reader 7).

Hatch Act

The Hatch Act contains restrictions on political activity by federal government employees, and by employees of certain state and local government agencies.

To view the more detailed information, go to the [U.S. Office of Special Counsel website](#).

Voting Residency Guidelines

Members of the Uniformed Services and Their Family Members

Uniformed Service personnel and their family members may not arbitrarily choose which state to declare as their legal voting residence without meeting the state's residency requirement. The following are

basic guidelines to follow in determining voting residency:

- In most states the legal voting residence is defined as where the citizen has, or has had, physical presence at the location and where there is the intent to remain or return.
- You may only have one legal residence at a time, but may change residency each time you are transferred to a new location. You must make a conscious decision to change residency e.g., registering to vote, registering a car, qualifying for in-state tuition, etc.
- Once residence is changed, you may not revert to the previous residence without re-establishing new physical presence and intent to remain or return.
- Family members of active duty military personnel may each have a different legal residence. A spouse does not automatically assume the legal residence of the active duty member upon marriage. Minors typically assume the legal residence of either parent, and when they become 18, they also have the option of establishing their own legal residence which can be different from either parent, assuming they have met the guidelines of physical presence and intent to remain or return.
- "Home of Record" is the address of a military member at the time of joining a particular Service. Your "Home of Record" may or may not be the same as your legal voting residence. You can choose to either maintain your legal voting residence at your "Home of Record" throughout your military career, or you may establish a legal voting residence in a state other than your "Home of Record".
- 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.

- If a citizen is uncertain about his or her current legal voting residence, the citizen should examine his or her connections or ties to the state or territory in question and consult with legal counsel.

Citizens Residing Outside the U.S.

Citizens residing outside the U.S. may not arbitrarily choose which state to declare as their legal voting residence without meeting the state's residency requirement. The following are basic guidelines to follow in determining voting residency:

- Your "legal state of residence" for voting purposes is the address where you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the U.S. This residence remains valid even though the citizen may no longer own property or have other ties to their last state residence and their intent to return to that state may be uncertain.
- 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.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO BE FOR THIS YEAR'S ELECTION?

Local election officials need to know the citizens' current address in order to send the absentee

ballot. Although it is the citizens' responsibility to notify their local election official of changes in their mailing address (where the citizen needs their ballot mailed) it is often forgotten. Because Uniformed Services members are highly mobile, FVAP recommends that the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) be completed in its entirety following the state instructions and submitted every year in January and whenever they move or are transferred. Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) can help by announcing the following procedures.

Send a change of address notification by submitting an FPCA. When completing the FPCA indicate your "NEW ADDRESS" and your "OLD ADDRESS". Completion instructions for each state can be found in Chapter 3 of the 2008-09 Voting Assistance Guide. State-by-State Instructions are also available online at www.fvap.gov.

In addition to informing the local election official of the citizen's current mailing address, submitting the FPCA will register or confirm the citizen's registration, and acts as a request for absentee ballots for any elections to be held that year.

A second option to indicate a change in address is writing a letter to your local election official with your name, date of birth, and both new and old addresses. The new address is where you would like to receive your ballot.

When using any of these options, it is important to include a voter registration number or Social Security Number, an email address, phone, fax number, and any further information that can help the local election official properly identify you and maintain current contact information.

Submit an address change early so that you have enough time to receive, vote your ballot, and return it to the local election official to meet state deadlines.

If you return to your state of legal

voting residence, or separate from military service, be sure to notify your local election official that you plan on voting at the polls in the next election.

NOTE: Deploying National Guard and Reserve members, in addition to the above instructions, should contact their local election office for additional information.

Mailing Election Materials

While many states allow electronic transmission (faxing or emailing) of election materials as an alternative, the fact remains that mail transit time continues to be a primary obstacle to ensuring timely delivery of election materials.

Many citizens are located in remote areas around the world where mail is not delivered or picked up on a regular basis (such as Service members in Operation Iraqi Freedom, sailors and marines aboard ship, airmen and sailors at isolated tracking sites around the world, as well as Peace Corps workers and missionaries in remote areas). For these individuals (and all other citizens using the postal system), the FVAP has a few mailing tips to speed up the mailing process.

Addressing Tips:

Type or print legibly in uppercase letters. No punctuation is needed. Include all of the following address information:

Recipient's name. Recipient's street address, post office box number, rural route number, box number, highway contract route number, suffixes, directionals, locators, Apartment number, Suite number or room number.

Recipient's city, state and ZIP Code, and if known, the four-digit add-on, ZIP+4. Be sure to hyphenate the ZIP+4. To find out your ZIP Code Select "What is my County, What is my Zip Code?" from the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov.

Always use a return address to include all elements of the destination address. Place in the upper left corner of the mail piece.

Please Note:

If a post office box number and a street address are used, make sure that the place where you want the mail delivered appears on the line immediately above the city, state, and ZIP Code line and that the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code corresponds to that address.

International Addressing:

For international mail, include the applicable foreign postal code, city or town, province or state name, and country name. Put the foreign postal code in front of the city or town name and on the same line. Place the city or town name and the province or state name on the next line after the street address information. Write the name of the foreign country in capital letters on the last line of the address.

Final Tips:

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) does not require postage if mailed in the U.S. postal system which includes all U.S. military post offices (APO, FPO) overseas as well as diplomatic pouches. Many Embassies and Consulates have access to U.S. military post offices. Those that have access will accept the FPCA and give it to the U.S. military post office where it will be mailed with no postage required. The FPCA may also be sent postage-free through the diplomatic pouch at Embassies and Consulates. However, the diplomatic pouch may not have a regular pick-up schedule.

Notarization and Witnessing Requirements

The following states have notary and/or witnessing requirements

for the Federal Post Card Application: American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and South Dakota.

The following states have notary and/or witnessing requirements for the the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB): Alabama, Alaska, Guam, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Under certain circumstances, Hawaii, Maine, New York and Tennessee require witnesses. To learn more, please refer to the state's section in the [Voting Assistance Guide](#).

If you are using the back-up FWAB any required notary/witness must sign block 7 of the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation. All designated military Voting Assistance Officers and Embassy and Consular Officials can notarize absentee balloting materials free of charge.

THE ABSENT UNIFORMED SERVICES VOTER MUST:

Be absent from his/her voting residence;

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.

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.

MILITARY

Where is my "legal voting residence?"

For voting purposes, your "legal voting residence" can be the state or territory where you last resided prior to entering military service or the state or territory that you have since claimed as your legal residence. Even though you may no longer maintain formal ties to that residence, the address determines your proper district, ward, precinct or parish for voting purposes. To claim a new legal residence you must have simultaneous physical presence and the intent to return to that location as your primary residence. Military and family members may change their legal residence every time they change permanent duty stations or they may retain their legal residence without change. Family members may have a different legal voting residence from the member. A JAG officer or legal counsel should be consulted before legal residence is changed because there are usually other factors that should be considered besides voting.

Can I vote in person where I am stationed?

Military members may vote in the state or territory where stationed if they change their legal residence to that state or territory, even if they live on a military installation. Be advised that there are legal obligations that may be incurred, such as taxation, if you change your state or territory of residence. Therefore, consult a JAG officer or legal counsel before making such a

decision. At the present time, there are no provisions for personnel stationed outside the United States to vote, in person, where stationed.

My family members are not in the military; can they also vote absentee?

The law entitles eligible family members of military personnel to vote absentee. Family members are considered to be in the same category of absentee voter as military members and generally should follow the same procedures. Family members of military personnel residing overseas, who are U.S. citizens and who have never resided in the U.S. may claim one of their U.S. citizen parent's legal state or territory of residence as their own if allowed by the state. Check [Chapter 3](#) of the Guide.

OVERSEAS CITIZENS

If I do not maintain a legal residence in the U.S., what is my "legal state of residence?"

Your "legal state of residence" for voting purposes is the state or territory where you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the United States. This right extends to overseas citizens even though they may not have property or other ties in their last state or territory of residence and their intent to return to that state or territory may be uncertain. When completing the FPCA's Voting Residence section, be sure to enter the entire mailing address of your last residence, including street or rural route and number. The address determines your proper district, ward, precinct or parish for voting purposes. Family members of citizens residing overseas, who are U.S. citizens and who have never resided in the U.S. may claim one of their U.S. citizen parent's legal state or territory of residence as their own if allowed by the state. Check [Chapter 3](#) of the Guide.

Will I be taxed by my last state or territory of residence if I vote absentee?

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 office only**, may not be used as the sole basis to determine residency for the purpose of imposing state and local taxes. If you claim a particular state or territory as your residence and have other ties with that state or territory in addition to voting, then you may be liable for state and local taxation, depending upon the laws of that particular state or territory. Consult legal counsel for information on probable tax obligations.

Can I register or vote in person at the embassy or consulate?

At the present time, there are no provisions for in-person voting or on-site registration to be conducted at U.S. embassies or consulates. U.S. embassy and consular officials will assist U.S. citizens in completing FPCA forms for their state, witness or notarize FPCA forms and ballots (if required), and provide other absentee voting information. U.S. embassy and consulate locations serve also as a mailing point. FPCA forms and other election materials may be mailed back, postage-paid, from these locations to your local voting jurisdiction in the U.S. where absentee registration and ballot requests are processed.

Guidelines for Persons Providing Voter Assistance to American Citizens Overseas

Who Can Provide Voting Assistance?

Designated U.S. consular personnel at embassies or consulates provide voting assistance. They are careful in the performance of their duties not to engage in activities that could be interpreted as being associated with any partisan political causes, issues or candidates. However, there are no special requirements for other persons who offer or attempt to provide absentee voting procedural assistance to citizens overseas. Persons who offer to provide this assistance should have the current official [Voting Assistance Guide](#) and be thoroughly familiar with its contents. The *Guide* is published by the Federal Voting Assistance Program and contains information on how to assist eligible voters. It also contains the procedural information required by each State to register or vote absentee. Those providing voting assistance should also ensure they have sufficient quantities of the official voting materials for distribution such as the Federal Post Card Application form (FPCA) and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

Persons providing assistance should also know how to get help through the Ombudsman service provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

Persons assisting eligible voters should be aware of the important role they assume. Inaccurate advice or assistance could disenfranchise the very citizens they are attempting to help. They should also be aware of potential legal penalties for knowingly providing false information, or knowingly and willfully intimidating, threatening or coercing, or attempting to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any

person attempting to register or vote. As a voting assistance officer, these persons become a part of the electoral process and their actions should always be circumspect to preclude the appearance of impropriety. They must protect the integrity of the electoral process.

How to Provide Assistance

General

Persons who help should provide procedural assistance only. On the FVAP web site, www.fvap.gov, answers are provided to the most frequently asked questions about absentee voting by citizens overseas. How to complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) form is detailed for each State in [Chapter 3](#) of the *Voting Assistance Guide*. Each State section in the *Guide* also contains the addresses of where to mail the FPCA and the deadlines for receipt of applications and absentee ballots. The best way to provide accurate procedural assistance is to show the potential voter the applicable State pages in the *Guide* and let the potential voter follow the instructions. The person providing the assistance may then check the application to see if it was completed properly or answer any questions the applicant may have.

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

When a person is asked to provide assistance to a potential voter for completion of the FWAB, it should be noted that this is an official absentee ballot as distinguished from the FPCA which is an application for registration and an absentee ballot. The potential voter should always be allowed to mark the ballot in private and place it in the security envelope and seal it without

any assistance. Persons may provide assistance in completing the information required on the transmittal envelope for the FWAB.

Partisan Organizations

Occasionally the official overseas organizations of the major political parties, Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad, will conduct voter registration drives in overseas areas. While these activities may be sponsored by partisan groups, they generally will assist any potential voter regardless of party preference. When these organizations sponsor voter registration drives, they should be clearly identified as being sponsored by the appropriate organization so that potential voters know who is providing the assistance. Frequently, both political parties will conduct or co-sponsor voter registration drives. Potential voters should be made aware of the fact that even if assistance or advice is provided by a partisan organization for registration, the potential voter always has complete control and secrecy in casting or marking the ballot.

Where To Go For Help

Persons overseas should first contact the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance. If that is not feasible, then they should contact organizations of American citizens who may have access to a Voting Assistance Guide and can provide a listing of toll free telephone numbers to call the FVAP from many foreign countries. In some instances they may contact the Voting Assistance Officer at U.S. military installations. However, access to many of the installations may be restricted so this may be a limited option. Persons unable to obtain assistance from any other source may call the Federal Voting Assistance Program on (703) 588-

1584 or [toll-free](tel:18004484848) from 64 countries using the phone numbers provided in the Voting Assistance Guide. These persons may also e-mail the Federal Voting Assistance Program on vote@fvap.ncr.gov or visit the Program's Web site at www.fvap.gov.

Legal Restrictions

1. The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* provides for the following:

a. Whoever knowingly deprives or attempts to deprive any person of a right under the *Act* shall be fined or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

b. Whoever knowingly gives false information for the purpose of establishing the eligibility of any person to register or vote under the *Act* or pays or offers to pay, or accepts payment for registering voting under the *Act* shall be fined or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

2. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 provides that a person, including an election official, who in any election for Federal office:

a. Knowingly and willfully intimidates, threatens, or coerces, or attempts to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, any person for:

(1) Registering to vote, or voting, or attempting to register or vote;

(2) Urging or aiding any person to register to vote, to vote, or to attempt to register or vote; or

(3) Exercising any right under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993; or

b. Knowingly and willfully deprives, defrauds, or attempts to deprive or defraud the residents of a State of a fair and impartially conducted election process, by:

(1) The procurement or submission of voter registration

applications that are known by the person to be materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent under the laws of the State in which the election is held; or

(2) The procurement, casting, or tabulation of ballots that are known by the person to be materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent under the laws of the State in which the election is held, shall be fined in accordance with title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than five years or both.

Collecting and Sharing Good Ideas and Lessons Learned

Your continuity folder and the resources listed below may also help you plan and obtain ideas for these upcoming campaigns.

Chapter One of the 2008-09 Voting Assistance Guide provides additional guidance for VAOs. In addition, Chapter Two provides in depth information on the UOCAVA absentee voting process.

The Department of State and the Uniformed Services provide best practices and good ideas on the FVAP website for sharing with other VAOs. Many of these ideas may be tailored and implemented during these campaigns. To obtain ideas for your program, select "Resources for Voting Assistance Officers" from www.fvap.gov. Then select "Voting Program Good Ideas from Voting Assistance Officers".

Activities you perform during these campaigns this election year may prove to be successful ideas that can be replicated by other VAOs. The FVAP encourages collecting and sharing these good ideas and success stories so that other VAOs may implement them in their program. Send your good ideas to your State Department or Service Voting Action Officer (refer to contact information below). Overseas citizen organization VAOs and individuals may submit their good ideas directly to the FVAP via email,

vote@fvap.ncr.gov.

Include email address ON the Federal Post Card Application. Explain to voters the importance of including an email address, a phone and fax number on the FPCA. Email has proven to be an effective method of communication between the local election official and the citizen, especially for resolving issues pertaining to the application.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) Good Ideas Program supports developing, collecting, sharing and implementing of Voting Assistance Officer's (VAOs) good ideas and lessons learned across the Services worldwide. The objective of the program is to enhance lines of communication among VAOs at all levels to facilitate global sharing of good ideas and lessons learned while enabling tailored local good ideas based on organizational voting assistance program and lessons learned from successes and mistakes.

As you provide absentee voting assistance, look at your voting assistance program, processes and procedures. You will find that there are some things you are doing very well with excellent results that others could use to improve awareness and participation among the [UOCAVA](#) citizens they assist.

The Good Ideas Report from each of the Services are displayed on the FVAP website. Lessons learned are disseminated through the [Voting Information News](#) newsletter.

State Voter Registration Verification Websites

States and territories are making it easier to find out your voter registration status. NOTE: The website

addresses are subject to change. Please check

www.fvap.gov/reference/links/index.html#svrvw or www.canivote.org

LINKS

- [The U.S. Senate](#)
- [The US House of Representatives](#)
- [Other Federal Sites](#)
- [State Election Sites](#)
- [State Legislatures](#)
- [Links of Interest to Overseas Citizens](#)
- [Election Organizations](#)
- [Political Parties](#)
- [Miscellaneous Election-related Organizations](#)