



FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1155

September 26, 2008

Ms. Marci Andino
Executive Director
P.O. Box 5987
Columbia, SC 29205-5987

Dear Ms. Andino:

MARCI

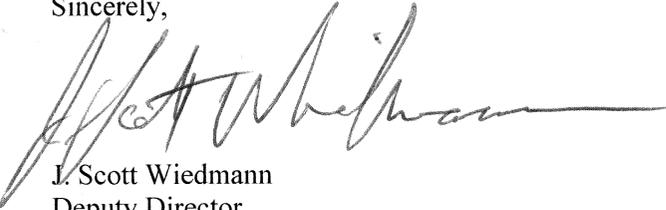
Every year I recommend specific legislative initiatives, which if enacted, would simplify and streamline the absentee voting process used by our citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. I would like to thank you for the work you and the state of South Carolina have done over the past several years to promote and support these initiatives.

Recent elections have emphasized the importance of the states enacting the provision of 45 or more days for ballot transit; electronic transmission of Federal Post Card Applications, blank ballots, and voted ballots; and, authorization for the state chief election official to implement emergency measures. States with these provisions were able to quickly respond to a greater number of situations faced by our brave men and women serving in combat areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and other U.S. citizens worldwide. I would ask you also to consider alternative methods that these citizens could use to request their absentee ballots such as phone, email or by proxy, and utilizing digital signatures with electronically transmitted materials.

After reviewing South Carolina's existing election code and procedures, I have identified one initiative that the South Carolina legislature might consider during the upcoming legislative session. This initiative is discussed in detail with suggested wording in the enclosed legislative initiative document. If this initiative were enacted and signed into law, it would significantly help to facilitate the absentee voting process for South Carolina's citizens covered by *UOCAVA*. Information available to FVAP indicates that there are 19,168 Uniformed Services members, an estimated 14,000 family members and approximately 51,000 overseas citizens that claim South Carolina as their voting residence.

As you review the enclosed initiatives for possible inclusion in South Carolina's 2009 legislative agenda, please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance. We can provide legislative wording that other states have enacted to implement similar measures and provide written or in-person testimony, if desired. We have come a long way in simplifying the absentee voting process used by our *UOCAVA* citizens - let's continue to work together to achieve the simplest possible absentee voting process while maintaining the integrity of our elections.

Sincerely,



J. Scott Wiedmann
Deputy Director

Enclosure:
2009 Legislative Initiative and Suggested Wording

South Carolina 2009 Legislative Initiative and Sample Language

Enfranchise Citizens Who Have Never Resided in the U.S.

There are many U.S. citizens who have never resided in a state and under current law are not entitled to vote. These are usually first or second-generation citizens who are subject to U.S. income tax and all other requirements of citizens. Except for the fact that they have never resided in a state, they would be eligible to vote in Federal elections. Some local election officials make exceptions and allow these citizens to vote. Sixteen states have passed legislation allowing these citizens to claim the legal residence of a parent. **We recommend these citizens be allowed to vote in elections for Federal offices** where either parent is eligible to vote under *UOCAVA*.

Sample Language

If a U.S. citizen outside the United States who has never lived in the United States has a parent who is a qualified elector, then that person is eligible to register and vote where his or her parent is a qualified elector.

