

A roundup of voting news from the Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters, and those who assist voters.

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Voting Assistance Officers' "To Do" This Month:

"Overseas Citizens Voters Week" is June 28 through July 7, 2008. Make in-hand distribution of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to as many people as possible during this week. See "2008 Voter Outreach Campaigns" article on page two for more information.

Over 25 State Primary elections remain after June. Encourage citizens to participate in these elections. Citizens can learn more about these primaries from their state by selecting "State Election Sites" from www.fvap.gov.

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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.

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Celebrate Independence – Register and Request Your Ballot!

The Secretary of Defense has designated June 28 to July 7, 2008 as **Overseas Citizens Voters Week**. This is an excellent time to get the word out as U.S. citizens gather for Independence Day activities. Prepare to conduct your voter outreach activities such as non-partisan voter registration drives.

“To Do” This Month

(continued):

- ☑ 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.
- ☑ Immediately disseminate News Releases. They relay critical, time-sensitive information on special and run-off elections, as well as primary election date changes.
- ☑ Post notices on bulletin boards and in high-traffic areas motivating people to register and vote. Include a point of contact name, telephone number and email address so that interested citizens will know how to contact you to obtain additional information or materials.

NOTE: The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the United States Federal Government, United States Department of Defense or the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the linked web sites, or the information, products or services contained therein. The Federal Voting Assistance Program does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations.

2008 Voter Outreach Campaigns – Use the Plan

On November 4, 2008, we will be electing 35 U.S. Senators, the entire House of Representatives and 13 state Governors. There will also be thousands of other state and local office elections and referenda. Election laws differ from state to state, but most state election laws require the absentee ballot request to be received at least 30 days before the general election. With Election Day so close there is not much time left.

Your Service’s Voting Action Plan describes the various phases of the election year and can be used as a guide for your voting assistance program. In addition, the Plan can provide guidance and ideas for the 2008 voter outreach campaigns.

The Plan disseminates information and guidance, and coordinates tasks related to the Federal Voting Assistance Program. Basically, it is a plan of action that lays out a timeline for providing voting assistance.

The overall objective of the Plan is to ensure that all citizens covered under UOCAVA are provided the necessary support to participate in the democratic process.

Included in the Plan is the scheduling of three voter outreach campaigns. These events are an opportune time to announce the importance of participating in the absentee voting process and encourage voters to register, request their absentee ballot and vote. Chapter Two of the *2008-09 Voting Assistance Guide* (available online) provides additional information on the process.

The objective of these campaigns is to promote voter outreach efforts worldwide. These events should help ensure citizens have the opportunity to receive information on how to obtain an absentee ballot and how to return their voted ballot on time to meet the state deadlines. The following is a summary of each of these absentee voting events.

Overseas Citizens’ Voters’ Week is conducted June 28 to July 7, 2008. VAOs in installations overseas and stateside hold voter outreach activities during celebration of our nation’s Independence. Voters who have not completed the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) should do so immediately! VAOs should also announce the states that will be holding primary elections in the following months. To find state primary dates refer to the Election Dates Calendar on the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov (select Resources for Voting Assistance Officers). VAOs, should not wait to the last minute, plan ahead! July 4 is only 123 days from the General Election.

Armed Forces Voters Week is conducted August 31 to September 7, 2008. During this Labor Day Holiday week, VAOs announce through various media that voters who have not completed the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) should do so immediately! By doing so, it will allow sufficient time for registering, requesting and receiving the blank ballot, and returning the voted ballot in time to be counted for the General election. VAOs also hold voter outreach activities during Armed Forces Voters Week,

Absentee Voting Week is celebrated October 12 to 18, 2008. During this Columbus Day Holiday week, VAOs are asked to announce through various media that voters should return their voted ballot immediately upon receiving it. Help dispel the myth that overseas absentee votes do not count! All properly executed ballots are counted.

If by this time Uniformed Services voters and overseas voters have not received their regular state ballot, they should use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Refer to Page 21 of the *2008-09 Voting Assistance Guide* for requirements on completing the FWAB (also available on the FVAP website).

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Moving? Send your local election official an updated FPCA with your new address. Send us an email so you and your replacement can continue receiving this newsletter.

Use the Plan (continued)

Your Service's Voting Action Plan is available through your Service website (link available from www.fvap.gov). Department of State and American organizations overseas VAOs may also request a copy of the DoD Voting Action Plan by sending an email to vote@fvap.ncr.gov.

Additional Resources with Ideas for the 2008 Voting Assistance Campaigns

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.

Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey (202) 736-4937, fax: (202) 647-6201, votinginfo@state.gov
Deputy VAO: Ms. Elizabeth Gracon, (202) 647-6129, fax: (202) 647-6201
http://travel.state.gov/law/info/info_2964.html

Service Voting Action Officers

Army: Mr. Alton Perry (703) 325-4530, DSN: 221-4530, fax: (703) 325-4532, DSN fax: 221-4532, alton.c.perry@conus.army.mil, <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/pssd/psb/votingindex.htm>

Navy: LT Jason Watkins 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672) (select option 6 from menu), fax: (901) 874-6844, DSN fax: 882-6844, vote@navy.mil, http://www.cni.navy.mil/cnic_hq_site/BaseSupport/CommandStaff/NavyVotingProgram/index.htm

Air Force: Mr. Gilbert D. Harrison, Jr. (210) 565-5000, toll free: 1-800 616-3775 (Select options 1, then 1, then 2 from menu), DSN: 665-5000, fax: (210) 565-2543, DSN fax: 665-2543, afpc/dpffofvotefund@randolph.af.mil, <http://www.afcrossroads.com/VoteFund/Vote/default.htm>

Marine Corps: Mr. David E. James (703) 784-9511, DSN: 278-9511, fax: (703) 784-9823, DSN fax: 278-9823, mra.voting.officer@usmc.mil, https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/pls/portal/url/page/m_ra_home/MR/Personnel/Voting

Coast Guard: LTJG Frank Marcheski (202) 475-5375, fax: (202) 475-5927, Frank.A.Marcheski@uscg.mil, http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

Links to the Services' websites are available at www.fvap.gov.

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC
20301-1155

(703) 588-1584
DSN 425-1584

TOLL FREE:
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

FAX:
(703) 696-1352
DSN 426-1352

Visit our website for
international toll-free phone
and fax numbers.

EMAIL:
vote@fvap.ncr.gov

Comments or
suggestions on this
newsletter are welcome
and appreciated.

Website:
www.fvap.gov

Vote!

Mailing Election Materials (continued from page 1)

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.

Share this issue of the *Voting Information News* with others!

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Department of Defense
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Washington, DC 20301-1155



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OFFICIAL VOTING INFORMATION MATERIAL – FIRST CLASS MAIL

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IN THE U.S. MAIL – DMM 703.8.0