

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and committee members. My name is Betsy Byers and I am the Co-Director of Elections for Secretary of State Robin Carnahan.

I want to thank you, Chairman DeGregorio and the EAC for this invitation to speak today.

Secretary Carnahan has placed extra emphasis on military and overseas voting in her first two years in office. She has two main goals with respect to UOCAVA voters:

- She wants to ensure that all Missouri military and overseas voters have an easy and quick method of getting voted ballots back to Missouri to be counted on Election Day; and
- She wants that process to be safe and secure.

Missouri's statutes have been changed so that our election laws are compliant with the changes in federal law, including recent changes to comply with the Help America Vote Act. Several sections of Missouri's statutes also reflect the mandatory provisions of UOCAVA. The Missouri Secretary of State's office has also adopted many of the provisions advocated by the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

It is then evident, that, with the help of our 116 local election authorities (LEA), Missouri has become a very "military voting friendly" state under Secretary Carnahan's guidance.

In fact, under Secretary Carnahan's guidance, Missouri has taken extra steps to go beyond those stipulated in UOCAVA to allow more military and overseas civilians to safely and easily cast their ballots.

Missouri statutes allow for the Secretary of State to designate certain locations as "inaccessible" on Election Day. This designation opens up the possibility for an overseas voter to electronically submit a voted ballot **directly** to their local election authority.

In other words, Secretary Carnahan has opened the way for several military and overseas voters to submit their voted ballots to their local election authority by either facsimile or e-mail.

54 locations across the globe have been declared inaccessible on Election Day 2006 by Secretary Carnahan. *A complete list of those areas has been submitted with my written testimony.*

Two important notes here – first, only voted ballots may be submitted with this declaration. Missouri statutes do not allow for local election authorities to fax or e-mail un-voted ballots to military personnel.

Secondly, UOCAVA voters are encouraged to use fax and/or e-mail as a last resort. Regular mail is still the preferred and recommended way to submit voted ballots.

Secretary Carnahan provided explicit instructions to local election authorities and military and overseas voters on how to handle ballots of this nature. *Copies of those instructions were also attached to my written testimony.*

By law, Missouri's regular absentee ballots are available six weeks prior to an election (42 days). Also, a special write-in absentee ballot may be requested and received prior to the availability of regular absentee ballots. For those UOCAVA voters who are not able to cast voted ballots by regular mail and expect the ballot to make it in time, electronic submission of voted ballots should help alleviate those concerns.

In order to make the electronic transmission of voted ballots as easy and secure as possible, Secretary Carnahan has provided several things to both local election authorities and voters:

1. Downloadable facsimile and e-mail cover sheets that LEAs can use to type in their names, addresses, fax numbers and e-mail addresses;
2. Specific instructions to the LEA on how to handle electronically submitted ballots;
3. Specific instructions to the voter on how to transmit a voted ballot electronically. These include adding a form of identification to the ballot and how to handle two-sided or over-sized ballots;
4. A comprehensive list of inaccessible locations that are provided to both LEAs and voters;
5. Explicit instructions to the LEAs on handling Federal Post Card Applications and Special Write-In Absentee Ballots.

In the 2004 Primary, 11 overseas military personnel returned voted ballots by facsimile. In the 2004 General Election, only 56 overseas military returned voted ballots by facsimile. No overseas citizens returned a voted ballot by facsimile in the 2004 elections.

Secretary Carnahan's goal is to increase this rate of return.

We have heard from several Missouri servicemen and women returning from the Middle East that awareness and ease of maneuvering through the process are the keys to helping military and overseas personnel vote.

By taking these steps and allowing the electronic return of certain voted ballots directly to local election authorities, Missouri is sure to build upon that return rate of 2004.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I have submitted written testimony and other exhibits to supplement my oral testimony.

I'd be happy to answer any of your questions.