



Federal Voting Assistance Program Voting Initiatives and MOVE Act

**Election Assistance Commission
December 3rd, 2009**

FVAP Mission

- **Assistance**: FVAP exists to help Uniformed Services personnel, their voting age dependents, and overseas civilian successfully exercise their right to vote in federal elections in order that they have an equal opportunity with the general population to vote and to have that vote counted.
- **Advocacy**: FVAP serves as the voice of Uniformed Services and overseas voters, identifying impediments to their ability to exercise their right to vote, and proposing methods to overcome those impediments.

FVAP Goals

- **1: UOCAVA voting success rates equal to or exceed general population rates**
 - Absentee ballot cast rate
 - Counted rate of those cast
 - FWAB utilization/success rate

- **2: UOCAVA voter participation rate equal to or exceed general population (age and gender adjusted)**

- **3: UOCAVA voter registration rate equal to or exceeds general population (age and gender adjusted)**
 - Compared to general population
 - Compared to desire to vote

- **4: Define the actual overseas citizen population**

MOVE Act: Federal Requirements

➤ More online tools

- FWAB
 - Federal Candidate list
 - Requires States accept for LEOs?
- State UOCAVA Election Official and Electronic Communications Address Database
- Online Voter Portals

➤ Expedited ballot return

- Overseas Uniformed Services Personnel
- Sent NLT 7 days prior to election; Free
- Working with MPSA to coordinate with tracking system and possibly integrate with State requirements

➤ Expanded voter outreach

- Installation Voting Assistance Offices
- Advertising and communications
 - Online FWAB
 - 30, 60, 90 day prior notices

➤ Improved data collection

- Coordinate with States and EAC
- Covers Election Day Survey info
- Online repository

➤ Reports

- Voting Assistance Program analysis and plan
- MOVE Act implementation
- Annual survey and overall effectiveness
- DOJ on enforcement
- EAC and NIST on Internet Voting Standards

MOVE Act: State Requirements

- **Transmit ballots 45 days prior to election**
 - Waivers allowed by Secretary of Defense
 - Not perpetual
 - Need to show adequate time available for voters
- **Transmit ballots electronically**
 - Does not define electronically
 - Fax alone provides little help to military voters
- **Accept Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots for all federal elections**
 - Continued usefulness of SWABs?
 - FVAP encourages universal adoption of FWAB
- **Free Online Ballot Receipt System**
- **Cannot require notary**

***FVAP could do nothing (which it isn't),
and States would still have these obligations***

Repeal of UOCAVA Section 104

- **MOVE Act repealed Section 104(a) to (d)**
 - Leaves only Section 104(e)
 - Allows early submission of FPCA
 - Only applies to Uniformed Service voters
 - Based upon complaints of high number of returned UOCAVA ballots returned as undeliverable

- **Result:**
 - States may require overseas civilian voters to submit a new absentee ballot application for each and every election
 - FVAP encouraging all UOCAVA voters to submit a new FPCA:
 - At every change of address, voting or delivery
 - Annually, odd years included
 - **LEOs processing millions more FPCAs to avoid handling 19,000 undeliverable ballots?**

Returned Ballots in Context



➤ **2008:**

▪ **MPSA:**

- 191,293 Blank ballots received from LEOs
- 17,457 misaddressed (9.1%)
- 10,621 redirected (5.5%)
- 6,836 (3.6%) Ballots returned to LEO as undeliverable

▪ **EAC:**

- 1.9% undeliverable; 2.4% for Section 104 ballots
- National absentee ballot undeliverable rate = 0.9%

➤ **2006:**

- **3.6% of UOCAVA ballots returned as undeliverable;**
- EAC called this “unrealistic” to continue
- National absentee ballot undeliverable rate = 1.1%

Automatically transmitted ballots were the only way many UOCAVA voters could participate in Special elections

Secretary of State Delegation

- In the Fall of 2008, FVAP along with 5 Secretaries of State traveled to seven military bases in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe



Key Findings

- Military postal system is prepared
 - Mail is archaic
 - Delivery takes at least 7-12 days each way to/from Middle East postal offices
 - Does not include “last mile” delivery
- There are no fax machines in the field
- Those in the field prefer email or internet-based voting
- Military members found State-by-State elections processes difficult to decipher and navigate.



FVAP Initiatives (1)

- **Direct-to-the-Voter Assistance Focus**
 - “TurboTax™/TaxCut™” the voting process with Wizards
 - Reduce need/reliance on Voting Assistance Officers
 - Call Center and Online Chat capability
 - Reformatted Voting Assistance Guide

- **Voting Wizards**
 - Online registration, absentee ballot application, ballot receipt and ballot marking wizards - Still requires hard-copy and wet signature for final delivery
 - Concept:
 - FVAP Supported = federal funding
 - Vendor Provided = COTS Technology deployment, choice of vendors
 - State Decided = State say in vendor and ballot; MOVE Act compliant
 - Voter Adopted = seamless, intuitive, and transparent process
 - RFQ by Christmas

FVAP Initiatives (2)

➤ Better Data

- Quadrennial Survey
 - Sound methodology
 - More detailed analysis
 - Now every two years
 - Full census of LEOs

- Coordinating with EAC and academic community
 - Define data standards
 - Coordinate/combine reports
 - Solve key data problems

- Combine survey with EAC?
 - Survey instrument
 - Survey questions
 - Common sections

➤ Election Official Assistance

- Provide greater services
 - Wizards
 - Workshops
 - Call Center Access

- Education and executive corrective action before enforcement

- State-by-State Index of Legislative Initiatives adoption

FVAP Initiatives (3)

➤ **Better Addresses**

- New FPCA at each change of duty station
 - MOVE Act requirement
 - Already required by DoD instruction
- Direct assistance to LEOs on addresses
 - Online database access for correct addresses
 - FVAP coordination with Services and EOs to define key areas of improvement

➤ **Better Mail Delivery**

- Standard envelope development – to and from
- Assistance on free postage issues
- Expedited delivery procedures
- Online ballot tracking



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