A UOCAVA Update

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of STATE ELECTION DIRECTORS

Summer Meeting
Lessons Learned in 2018 and 2020 Preparations

July 15, 2019
Today I’ll cover…

- What is FVAP & UOCAVA
- Federal Post Card Application
- Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot
- 2020-2021 Voting Assistance Guide Coordination
- How we can help *you* during the 2020 election cycle
- UPU Contingency Actions
- US Air Force Voting Experience
FVAP & UOCAVA
The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986, or UOCAVA, allows certain U.S. citizens to apply to register and vote absentee in elections for federal office. UOCAVA amended by:

- **HAVA 2002** required states to notify voters the reasons for rejecting a registration application or absentee ballot request
- **MOVE Act 2009** required states to make voter registration and absentee ballot applications available electronically. Additionally required ballots to be sent out 45 days prior to an election.

FVAP administers UOCAVA on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.
FVAP Responsibilities

- Training
  - Installation and Unit Voting Action Officers
  - Embassies and Consulates
- Maintain voter resources
  - Voting Assistance Guide
  - Website
  - Online Assistant
- Report to Congress
- DOD Instruction
- Data Collection
- Waiver Requests
Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

- Slight redesign for 2020
- Previous editions should still be accepted
- State requirements referenced

**Used for both Registration & Ballot Request**
Note: Between 2012 and 2016, the percent of ADM who reported using an FPCA to request their absentee ballot dropped from 47% to 39%. 

FPCA Importance for UOCAVA Protections

Ballot Request Forms for UOCAVA Protections:

- FPCA: 96%
- State form with a UOCAVA classification selected: 69%
- State form w/ no UOCAVA classification; still covered: 86%
- Other form indicates voter covered under UOCAVA: 57%
Slight update for 2020

If both state ballot and FWAB are received, only accept the state ballot

UOCAVA voters can also use it in advance of an election by noting the election date on envelope and filling in which party they wish to vote for

UOCAVA voters may vote by writing the name of a political party

Can not be rejected based on the paper or envelope type it arrives in

Voters need to be registered before using a FWAB
✓ In Coordination with all 55 States and territories
✓ Distributed to military installations, Consulates, and Embassies worldwide
✓ Standardization of the Voting Assistance Guide into plain language to better support VAOs in the field and individual voters who visit FVAP.gov: 89% VAOs found it useful.
FVAP Call Center

Our most popular resource

✓ 40,000+ inquires in 2016
✓ Available Monday – Friday
✓ 7:30am – 4:00pm Eastern Standard Time
✓ 1-800-438-VOTE (8683)
✓ vote@fvap.gov

Call center available to voters and election officials!
ETS began in the 1992 election to assist Service members deployed for Operation Desert Shield/Storm with transmission of their election materials.

What ETS currently offers:

- FVAP can forward emailed election materials only from voters whose state law allows fax machine, but not email, receipt.
- Voters that have the ability to email or fax their election official directly, should do so.
- FVAP provides assistance to those voters that have limited access to fax machines, scanners, etc.
- NOTE: FVAP no longer processes direct emailing of materials between voters and local election officials based on state authorization.
Things to consider leading up to an election!

- Review UOCAVA address formatting for military and overseas citizens
- Coordinate envelope design, drop-offs and pick-ups with local postal officials
- Leverage FVAP.gov for your new staff or a refresher for current staff
- Let FVAP know when your address changes!

**Military Voter Example**

PFC John Doe
PSC 3 Box 4120
APO AE 09021

**Overseas Citizen Example**

MR THOMAS CLARK
117 RUSSELL DRIVE
LONDON W1P 6HQ
GREAT BRITAIN
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FVAP Call to Action 2020
Customer Service Recommendations

✓ FPCA has been accepted!
✓ How long their FPCA will be good for
✓ Status Check
✓ Contact Info

*TESTING* Your FPCA has been accepted!

coe_noreply@state.de.us <coe_noreply@state.de.us>  Tue, Mar 22, 2016 at 3:00 AM
To: delawarehokie@gmail.com

Dear HOWARD GEORGE SHOLL JR:

The Department has accepted your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and will send you a ballot or information of how to access your ballot at least 45 days before each election in which you are eligible to vote. The Department will notify you by email once your ballot has been sent or is available online.

Your FPCA is valid through December 31 the year following the next General Election.

You can check the status of your FPCA and/or your ballot by selecting the appropriate items in the “Voter Portal” at https://ivote.de.gov.

Please contact the office if you do not receive your ballot in a timely manner or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Department of Elections
New Castle County Office
Carvel State Office Bldg
820 N French St Ste 400
Wilmington DE 19801
Email: absentee@state.de.us
Phone: (302) 577-3464

Transaction ID: 20160322085901444196
Ballot Received
& Ballot Counted!

Howard Sholl <delawarehokie@gmail.com>

*TESTING* Your absentee ballot has been received!

coe_noreply@state.de.us <coe_noreply@state.de.us>
To: delawarehokie@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 22, 2016 at 3:00 AM

Dear HOWARD GEORGE SHOLL JR:
The Department received your absentee ballot on 03/22/2016 for the 04/26/2016 Presidential Primary Election.

You can check the status of your ballot by selecting the appropriate items in the "Voter Portal" at https://vote.de.gov.

The Department will let you know whether or not your ballot was counted following the election. If it was not counted, we will tell you why. Ballots received on time are in most instances counted.

Sincerely,

Department of Elections
New Castle County Office
Carvel State Office Bldg
820 N French St Ste 400
Wilmington DE 19801
Email: absentee@state.de.us
Phone: (302) 577-3464

Transaction ID: 100268808-W N 212820

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Howard Sholl <delawarehokie@gmail.com>

*TESTING* Your absentee ballot has been counted!

coe_noreply@state.de.us <coe_noreply@state.de.us>
To: delawarehokie@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 22, 2016 at 3:00 AM

Dear MARCIA MARY SHOLL:
The Department has counted your absentee ballot for the 04/26/2016 Presidential Primary Election.

Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Department of Elections
New Castle County Office
Carvel State Office Bldg
820 N French St Ste 400
Wilmington DE 19801
Email: absentee@state.de.us
Phone: (302) 577-3464

Transaction ID: 100475719-W N 212821
FVAP Call to Action 2020
Customer Service Recommendations

☑️ Reason ballot was not counted!

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Howard Sholl <delawarehokie@gmail.com>

*TESTING* Your absentee ballot was not counted!

coe_noreply@state.de.us <coe_noreply@state.de.us>  
To: delawarehokie@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 22, 2016 at 3:00 AM

Dear HOWARD GEORGE SHOLL JR:

The Department did not count your absentee ballot for the 04/26/2016 Presidential Primary Election.

Reason: Oath was not signed

Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Department of Elections  
New Castle County Office  
Carvel State Office Bldg  
820 N French St Ste 400  
Wilmington DE 19801  
Email: absentee@state.de.us  
Phone: (302) 577-3464

Transaction ID: 100268808-W-N-212820
Emailing to [.mil] addresses:

- Heightened security concerns

- Hyperlinks disabled
  - Separate links in email body
  - Clearly identify LEO contact information

- Bouncebacks
  - Be aware
  - Ask for private email, if necessary/possible
FVAP Call To Action – Absentee Voting Week
First Week of October

Reach out to Military Installations in your area
DoD Postal Updates

- Recommended Mailing Dates for voters were published

- USPS/MPSA upgraded Global Business Systems in 2015 to improve service of absentee ballots mailed with the Label 11-DoD

- FVAP/MPSA/USPS 2016 Pilot Project focused on transaction information where balloting materials appear in the USPS/MPSA mail stream
General State Policy Trends

- Voter ID
  - UOCAVA voters are exempt under HAVA
- Online Registration
  - Are UOCAVA protections granted through online registration portals?
- FPCA Section 6 requirements are considered obstacles
  - Oath requirements
  - Employer information
  - Race
  - Previous address
  - State residency requirements
- Witness requirements remain a difficulty for UOCAVA voters to complete
  - Alabama, Virginia
- Never Resided Voters
✓ If you are a state that does not process FPCA forms for the 2020 elections until January 1, 2020 - Could you put them in a drawer and process them in the new year?
✓ How early could you accept a FWAB labeled for the November 3, 2020 election?
✓ Can you accept an absentee ballot or FWAB that does not have the voted ballot in a security envelope?
✓ Do you send state and local office only ballots using the postage paid indicia?
Overseas Citizen Population Analysis

2016 Election

5.5 MILLION
U.S. CITIZENS
OVERSEAS

3 MILLION
OF THEM
CAN VOTE
*They’re 18+ years old

BASED ON 2016 DATA
Overseas Citizen Population Analysis

2016 Election

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE VOTING-AGE AMERICANS?

#1 CANADA 622,492
#2 UNITED KINGDOM 329,274
#3 MEXICO 201,415
#4 FRANCE 169,037
#7 ISRAEL 113,651
#5 JAPAN 125,779
#8 GERMANY 94,777
#9 ITALY 70,465
#6 AUSTRALIA 115,805
#10 SOUTH KOREA 62,698

BASED ON 2016 DATA
Overseas Citizen Population Analysis

2016 Election

- Nearly half said it was the first time they requested an absentee ballot while living in that country (44%).
- 87% requested an absentee ballot.
- 91% returned it.
- 86% of those who voted were confident their vote was counted.
208,329 BALLOTS FROM OVERSEAS CITIZENS WERE RECEIVED IN 2016. THAT'S A 6.9% TURNOUT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

TURNOUT VARIES GREATLY BY COUNTRY, EVEN AMONG THOSE WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

% OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS

SOURCE: FVAP OVERSEAS CITIZEN POPULATION ANALYSIS OF STATE RECORDS
Overseas Citizen Population Analysis

2016 Election

Components of the Voting Gap

Source: FVAP Overseas Citizen Population Analysis
Military members' engagement in the 2016 election decreased compared to 2012, the last presidential election year.

- Percentage who said they were interested in the election in 2016 dropped 8 percentage points from 2012.
- Registration was down 13 points.
- Participation (submitting a ballot) was down 12 percentage points.
More ADM in 2016 gave motivation-related reasons for not having voted.

- In 2016, 61% of ADM who did not vote said it was because of lack of motivation, such as saying “I did not want to vote.”
DoD Voting Assistance Works

Service members who sought voting assistance were significantly more likely to return their ballot.

- **All Military Members**: 93% sought, 69% didn’t seek.
- **1st Time Voters**: 94% sought, 56% didn’t seek.

![Graph showing ballot return rates for service members who sought vs. did not seek voting assistance.](image-url)
Through VAO Workshops, we train service members on where to find UOCAVA information on:

- Key state deadlines
- Changes to election information in particular states, like changes in submission methods or sharing emergency information that impacts elections
- Participation by state and local election officials
- Monthly distribution of upcoming elections to all active duty personnel
DoD Voting Assistance Works

Air Force Service Voting Action Officer

✔️ Kelly Weakly

Joint Base San Antonio – Randolph, Installation Voting Assistance Officer

✔️ Shancii Brown