

THE FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



THE BALLOT IS STRONGER THAN
THE BULLET

— Abraham Lincoln

**FOURTH
REPORT**

Prepared by the Staff
The Federal Voting Assistance Program
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Manpower)
Washington, D.C. 20301

THE FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

The absentee voting program of the United States Government was established by Public Law 296, 84th Congress, the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955.

It has for its basic objective the providing of a maximum opportunity to vote in local, state and Federal elections for those United States citizens comprising the total Defense effort and related activities. These include:

- Members of the Armed Forces while in active service, and their spouses and dependents.
- Members of the Merchant Marine of the United States, and their spouses and dependents.
- Civilian employees of the United States in all categories serving outside the territorial limits of the several states of the United States and the District of Columbia and their spouses and dependents when residing with or accompanying them, whether or not the employee is subject to the civil-service laws and the Classification Act of 1949, and whether or not paid from funds appropriated by the Congress.
- Members of religious groups or welfare agencies assisting members of the Armed Forces, who are officially attached to and serving with the Armed Forces, and their spouses and dependents.

As of 30 September 1962, these categories involved a total of approximately 3.6 million individuals eligible to vote by age.

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SCOPE OF AUTHORITY:

Under the terms of the statute the President is authorized to appoint an official to serve as principal executive of the program, with the right of redelegation for administrative purposes. The Secretary of Defense was appointed to this responsibility (Executive Order 10646, November 22, 1955), including the requirement that he report to the President and the Congress on administration of the program each two years. The present report covers the period from September 1961 through September 1963.

Title One of the Federal Voting Assistance Act recommends to the states the enactment of simplified absentee voting procedures for all persons covered by its provisions. This includes:

- A simplified system of absentee registration.
- A uniform ballot application and transmittal procedure, and
- An adequate amount of time for the ballot to be mailed and returned.

The entire program revolves around use of the Federal Post Card Application.

FILL OUT BOTH SIDES OF THE CARD

(NAME) _____

(OFF. GOVT. AGENCY, OR OFFICE) _____

(HQL. BLDG. STATION, SHIP OR OFFICE) _____

(STREET NO., APO, OR FPO NO.) _____

(CITY, POSTAL ZONE, STATE) _____

FREE OF U. S. POSTAGE
INCLUDING AIR MAIL

OFFICIAL ELECTION BALLOTING MATERIAL—VIA AIR MAIL

To: _____

(TITLE OF ELECTION OFFICIAL) _____

(COUNTY OR TOWNSHIP) _____

(CITY OR TOWN, STATE) _____

Standard Form 76
Revised 1962
Issued under 3 U. S. C. A. 2184

This card is supplied on a world-wide basis to all military and civilian agencies involved. The Act recommends that the card be accepted as registration, or as an application for registration forms, as well as an application for ballot. This procedure permits one mailing of a readily available post card to accomplish both registration and request for ballot.

Title Two of the Federal Voting Assistance Act sets forth authority for its administration and calls for the cooperation of all Federal Agencies and governments of the respective states. The Secretary of Defense, as the Presidential designee, appointed the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower) to serve as the Coordinator of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. Staff action in support of program objectives proceeds from this level, involving coordination with other government agencies and direct action with the legislatures of the various states.

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LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

For the past eight years the Department of Defense has sought legislative changes in the states to accomplish the objectives of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. In general, the result has been substantial improvement in uniform provisions for absentee balloting on the part of a majority of the states, although it is a fact that a great number still insist upon highly difficult absentee voting procedures. These conditions are discussed at greater length in the following state-by-state listing of remaining problems and are illustrated by the maps on pages 19 to 21.

The following states have met substantially all suggestions of Public Law 296 for all categories:

Alaska	Illinois	Minnesota	N. Dakota	Vermont
California	Iowa	Missouri	Oregon	Washington
Colorado	Kansas	Montana	S. Dakota	Wisconsin
District of Columbia	Kentucky	Nebraska	Tennessee	Wyoming
Idaho	Maine	Nevada	Utah	

The following states will require changes in their voting laws to meet all suggestions of Public Law 296:

ALABAMA

Alabama has no provisions for voting by absentee process for anyone except for members of the Armed Forces and their wives. These persons must register in person before being permitted to vote. All persons are required to pay a poll tax as a condition precedent to obtaining a ballot.

ARIZONA

Arizona has an adequate system for Armed Forces personnel. They may use the Federal Post Card Application as simultaneous application for ballot and registration forms. All others may register and vote absentee, but the process is tedious. Application must be made for an "Affidavit of Registration" which is returned to the county four months before an election. To obtain an absentee ballot, there must first be a request for an "Application for Absent or Disabled Voter's Ballot." This is returned and then the ballot is sent. The total ballot round trip time is 30 days.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas has a poll tax requirement for everyone except members of the Armed Forces. The poll tax records act in lieu of registration, which is not required.

Members of the Armed Forces may apply for ballot by using the Federal Post Card Application. All other categories must first request an

"Application for Ballot" which is then sent back for the ballot.

The ballot round trip time is 30 days for members of the Armed Forces; other overseas personnel are allowed 20 days.

Arkansas has a unique system of permitting members of the Armed Forces to write out their own ballot on paper, have it sworn to, and sent to the county clerk. This is seldom used, however.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut has met all requirements of Public Law 296 for General Elections. There is no absentee voting in the Primary Elections.

Connecticut has a challenge-type, post-endorsement primary system in which absentee voting is not permitted.

DELAWARE

Delaware provides an adequate system for members of the Armed Forces, their wives and dependents, the Merchant Marine, and religious groups or welfare agencies accompanying the Armed Forces.

It makes no provision for other civilians to register by an absentee process. Primary nominations are on a party convention basis in which no elections are held.

FLORIDA

Florida has met all suggestions of Public Law 296 with the exception of providing a means of absentee registration for categories other than members of the Armed Forces and their wives who are now the only categories permitted to register by absentee process.

GEORGIA

Georgia needs to broaden its coverage to include all categories. It denies the use of the Federal Post Card Application except to members of the Armed Forces, their spouses and dependents. It provides for absentee registration for Armed Forces, spouses, and dependents, but requires a dual process. All others must register in person six months prior to the General Election. The ballot round trip time is adequate for everyone.

HAWAII

Hawaii's present absentee voting laws permit all persons to register and vote by an absentee process. The methods prescribed, however, make it virtually impossible for the categories covered by Public Law 296, 84th Congress, to cast a vote.

Absentee registration and ballot request are not simultaneous thus requiring a dual application for unregistered voters. The Federal Post Card may be used only by members of the Armed Forces. Members of the Armed Forces and students may accomplish the registration by having an affidavit sworn to before an official authorized to administer oaths. All other persons must find three registered Hawaiian citizens who are willing to sign an affidavit to the effect that the applicant for absentee registration is in fact a bonafide citizen of Hawaii.

The most serious difficulty in the entire system is the very short ballot round trip time. Although an application may be made far enough in advance, the

short time between the primary election and the general election, with subsequent time elapse for printing of ballots, in effect makes the ballot round trip time approximately 15 days which is inadequate. This amount of time is probably sufficient for personnel stationed on the West Coast or in Hawaii. But those Hawaiian citizens serving in Europe or Africa are effectively disenfranchised.

INDIANA

Indiana provides an adequate system for members of the Armed Forces only. All other categories must register and vote by dual process. The ballot must be requested on a special form provided by the state, except by members of the Armed Forces who may use the Federal Post Card Application.

LOUISIANA

Louisiana requires personal registration for everyone. Otherwise, it has met the suggestions of Public Law 296. Ballot round trip time is sufficient.

MARYLAND

Maryland provides an adequate system for members of the Armed Forces, Merchant Marine, and religious groups and welfare agencies. It requires personal registration of everyone else. The above listed categories may use the Federal Post Card Application which is sent to the Secretary of State. Wives of all categories listed in Public Law 296 may use the Federal Post Card Application if they are registered. They forward the Post Card to their county of residence.

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts has met all requirements of Public Law 296 for General Elections. There is no absentee voting in the Primary Elections. All efforts to change this situation have failed.

MICHIGAN

Michigan has met all suggestions of Public Law 296, except for coverage of certain civilians. Civilians attached to and serving with the Armed Forces are covered, but State Department, USIA, etc., personnel are not. These latter civilians may register and vote absentee, but the process involves a lengthy dual application for both registration and voting.

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi permits absentee voting for members of the Armed Forces, Merchant Marine, Red Cross, civilians attached to and serving with the Armed Forces and the wives of the above listed categories. Other overseas civilians may not vote by absentee process at all.

For those categories permitted to vote, the system meets all suggestions of Public Law 296, 84th Congress.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire permits no absentee voting in Primary Elections. The ballot round trip time is approximately 20 days, which is insufficient. All other suggestions of Public Law 296 have been met.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey provides an adequate system of registration and voting for members of the Armed Forces. All other categories must register in person, must make a dual application for ballot. The ballot round trip time is 25 days for all categories.

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico has met all suggestions of Public Law 296 in elections for Federal offices. There is no absentee voting in New Mexico except for the categories of personnel set forth in the Federal Voting Assistance Act. All absentee voting for state officials has been held unconstitutional by the New Mexico Supreme Court.

NEW YORK

Absentee voting is permitted in General Elections only, except for members of the Armed Forces and their families who may vote in General Elections and special elections. There is no absentee voting by anyone in primary elections.

In those elections where it is permitted, New York has an adequate system of absentee voting for members of Armed Forces and their families.

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina has an adequate system for persons in the Armed Forces, and their spouses, the Merchant Marine, and civilians attached to and serving with the Armed Forces.

All other categories of persons may vote in General Elections only, must register in person, may not use the Federal Post Card Application, and must make a dual application for a ballot.

Ballot round trip time for Armed Forces and others listed above is 60 days. Thirty days is allowed for all others.

OHIO

Ohio provides an adequate system for members of the Armed Forces and spouses. All others must register in person, must make dual application for ballot, and may not make use of the Federal Post Card Application.

Ballot round trip time is adequate for everyone.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma makes adequate provisions for all categories except civilians not attached to the military. These civilians must register in person and may not use the Federal Post Card Application. Ballot round trip time is sufficient.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania provides adequate provisions for members of the Armed Forces. All other categories must register in person, apply by dual process and may not use the Federal Post Card Application.

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island provides adequate coverage in general and special elections for all persons except Federal agency civilians. These civilians must register in person and must make dual application for a ballot. There is no absentee voting in Primary Elections.

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina permits absentee voting only for members of the Armed Forces and their spouses, Merchant Marine, Red Cross, USO and civilian employees of the United States overseas.

The wives of personnel other than members of the Armed Forces are not included. Simultaneous absentee registration and ballot request is not permitted.

The ballot round trip time is adequate.

TEXAS

The Federal Post Card Application may be used by all categories of persons covered under Public Law 296. Applicants using the Federal Post Card Application must place the poll tax receipt in an envelope along with the Federal form as proof of payment of the poll tax.

The entire poll tax question is presently under consideration and will be voted on by the citizens of Texas in November of 1963.

VIRGINIA

Virginia provides an adequate system of absentee voting for members of the Armed Forces. All other persons must pay the poll tax as a condition precedent to voting and must register in person. Members of the Armed Forces and their spouses may apply for an absentee ballot by submitting a Federal Post Card Application. All other categories must use a dual process for obtaining a ballot. The state application for ballot must be returned with 63¢ postage to defray the expense of returning the ballot to the applicant. Ballot round trip time is adequate.

WEST VIRGINIA

In 1963 the State of West Virginia repealed all special provisions for absentee registration and voting for all categories of persons covered under Public Law 296. The law presently states that persons desiring to vote by absentee ballot must request a state provided application form from the Clerk of the Circuit Court, county of residence. This form must be returned to the clerk as an application for an absentee ballot.

In order to register to vote, all persons must apply for an application for absentee registration from the clerk of the county court and return it 30 days before an election.

GUAM

The Territory of Guam permits absentee voting for members of the Armed Forces, members of the Merchant Marine, and civilians serving with the Armed Forces who are outside of Guam. These may use the Federal Post Card Application as a request for an absentee ballot and for automatic registration.

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico has no provision for absentee voting, despite sizeable numbers in the Armed Forces of the United States.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

The Virgin Islands has no provision for absentee voting.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

The achievement of corrective legislation in the states continues to be a key requirement, and further efforts to gain the full benefits of Public Law 296 will continue in those states which have yet to grant them.

At the same time, it is apparent that the Armed Forces and participating Federal agencies must themselves make a greater effort to utilize the voting privileges offered under the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955, or the states themselves may refuse further legislative changes. This problem is discussed at greater length in the subsequent section on Activities for 1964.

In the Elections of 1962 the Department of Defense, the Armed Forces, and participating Federal agencies worked to provide necessary information and materials bearing upon the elections in each state. These procedures have by now become more or less standard, involving as they do the distribution of Federal Post Card Applications, the formulation of regulations covering administration of the voting program, the appointment of Voting Officers, and the advising of individuals of their voting rights, privileges and responsibilities. In addition, the Services are required to safeguard the integrity and secrecy of the ballot and the right of all personnel to vote freely for the candidates of their choice.

The Office of Armed Forces Information and Education published its biennial edition of the Voting Information Pamphlet, giving full details on state voting laws, election dates, and offices to be filled. Voting posters, display kits, and other visual aids were distributed.

Full press, radio and TV coverage were provided through a total of several hundred overseas outlets.

Voting Officers were appointed and functioning at all levels of command by April, providing individual and group instruction. All Services, additionally, included in their regulations a phased program of activity to encourage absentee voting, beginning in April and continuing to Armed Forces Voters Day in September. This latter event is proclaimed biennially by the Secretary of Defense, and represents the culmination of all efforts to stimulate voter participation and to promote citizenship interest. Meetings, exhibits and concerts are featured at many bases, and full emphasis is given to the inclusion of Service families.

It had been hoped that the sum total of all these efforts and influences prior to the Elections of 1962 would see a pronounced increase in the percentage of participation in an off-year election, both individually and by organizations. Nevertheless, as the following table shows, there was no appreciable gain over the percentages in previous off-year elections.

REPORTS FROM THE SERVICES ON 1962 ELECTIONS

	ARMY	NAVY	AIR FORCE	MARINE CORPS	TOTAL OR AVERAGE
1. Strength 31 October 1962	958,069	666,828	880,066	190,708	2,695,671
2. Eligible by Age to Vote	719,145	460,734	692,150	114,635	1,986,664
3. Total of eligible persons who voted	128,727	99,012	123,895	47,000	398,634
4. Percentage of eligible persons who voted	17.9%	21.49%	17.9%	41.0%	20.1%

OTHER AGENCIES:

Much the same percentage results were obtained by Federal civilian agencies participating in the absentee voting program. These agencies have uniformly cooperated with the Department of Defense in the distribution of Federal Post Card Applications, Voting Information Pamphlets and other necessary materials, and have been notably helpful in many instances where persons in isolated locations have been enabled to maintain their voting franchise.

At the same time, it is evident that the participating agencies were far from placing sufficient emphasis upon the citizenship aspects and responsibilities inherent in the program. The following table represents the percentages of participation by agencies with over 50 overseas personnel as of 30 September 1962.

REPORTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES ON 1962 ELECTIONS

AGENCY	TOTAL ELIGIBLE	NUMBER VOTED	PERCENTAGE
Agency for Int'l Development	6187	619	10.0%
American Battle Monuments Comm.	60	27	45.0
Commerce	849	188	22.1
Commerce (Maritime Admin.)	60,000	12,000	20.0
General Accounting Office	137	7	5.1
Interior	437	18	4.1
Panama Canal Company	Not Reported	4,000	Not Attainable
Peace Corps (Included in AID Report)	-	-	-
State	8,798	676	7.7
Treasury	158	30	19.0
Treasury (Coast Guard)	4,575	948	20.7
USO	26	2	7.7
USIA	1,230	Not Reported	Not Reported
Veterans Administration	127	6	4.7

ACTIVITIES FOR 1964:

It is apparent from the foregoing that further activity in the Federal Voting Assistance Program must continue to center about two principal problems. These are:

1. Working with the states to achieve complete acceptance, in a single, uniform absentee voting law, of all recommendations of Public Law 296, 84th Congress. Those states which have already done this have usually benefited from the improved and simplified system offered them through the Federal program. This includes such important matters as priority handling of airmail, together with postage free transmission of ballot applications.

Additionally, there has not been a single instance of fraudulent use of an absentee ballot in the Federal Voting Assistance Program's history, owing to the careful safeguards maintained by all participating agencies, and owing further to the distinctive application forms and ballot envelopes which are used.

Until every state has a simple and effective means of absentee voting in all elections, however, for all its citizens serving the Government of the United States, this goal of the Federal Voting Assistance Program will not have been met.

2. The need for participating military and civilian agencies to achieve the maximum potential of the absentee voting program. Here it is plain that a far greater effort must be launched and sustained through the months preceeding November of 1964, and to that end the Federal Voting Assistance Program will emphasize the following steps for all agencies:

- 100% in-hand delivery of Federal Post Card Applications to all voting age personnel of the Armed Forces, and recommendations for the same percentage by all other agencies.

- Top-to-bottom command emphasis upon the individual citizen's responsibilities to register and to vote.

- Emphasis upon the selection of qualified Voting Officers. All agencies should recognize the important assignments which these officers are expected to handle and accordingly select outstanding persons for these positions.

- Greater coordination effort on a government-wide basis to insure maximum compliance with program objectives by all participants.

- Intensive inspection of Federal Voting Assistance Program activities at home and abroad, beginning in early Summer and proceeding until the weeks ~~immed~~ immediately before the November Elections.

- Full emphasis upon making Armed Forces Voters Day a major election year event and success.

The Armed Forces and all other Federal agencies have a clear duty to place the highest priority upon the voting privileges of citizens serving away from home. The individual himself has the duty of facing his responsibility as a citizen and of participating as fully as circumstances will permit in the affairs of his local, state and Federal governments.

It must be the continuing effort of all participating elements to further such recognition and to assist the individual in its attainment.

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ESTIMATED DISTRIBUTION BY STATE AND TERRITORY OF MILITARY PERSONNEL
ON ACTIVE DUTY 31 OCTOBER 1962 ELIGIBLE BY AGE TO VOTE 1/

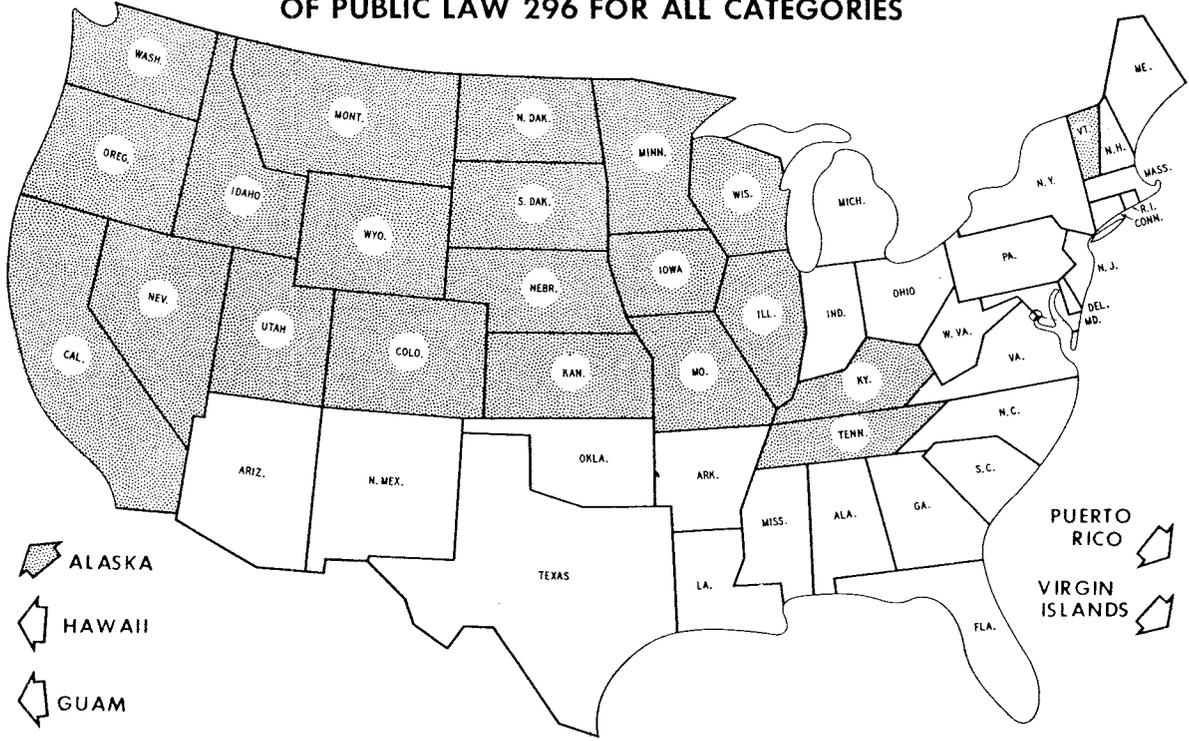
State or Territory	Number	State or Territory	Number
TOTAL	1,986,500		
Alabama	36,500	Montana	8,500
Alaska	1,300	Nebraska	14,500
Arizona	14,500	Nevada	3,000
Arkansas	23,000	New Hampshire	9,000
California	118,000	New Jersey	40,000
Canal Zone	200	New Mexico	10,500
Colorado	23,000	New York	129,500
Connecticut	29,000	North Carolina	72,500
Delaware	3,200	North Dakota	11,000
Dist. of Columbia	3,000	Ohio	98,000
Florida	43,500	Oklahoma	25,000
Georgia	66,000	Oregon	34,000
Guam	1,300	Pennsylvania	126,000
Hawaii	12,500	Puerto Rico	9,000
Idaho	10,500	Rhode Island	9,000
Illinois	111,000	South Carolina	23,500
Indiana	56,000	South Dakota	8,500
Iowa	40,500	Tennessee	48,500
Kansas	28,000	Texas	114,000
Kentucky	51,000	Utah	8,500
Louisiana	31,500	Vermont	7,000
Maine	14,500	Virgin Islands	500
Maryland	35,000	Virginia	50,500
Massachusetts	56,500	Washington	43,000
Michigan	78,500	West Virginia	28,500
Minnesota	38,500	Wisconsin	64,000
Mississippi	16,500	Wyoming	5,000
Missouri	42,500		

1/ Total military personnel on active duty "eligible by age to vote" as reported by services, distributed according to Selective Service Credits 30 June 1962, with allowance for the lower voting ages in Georgia, Kentucky, Alaska and Hawaii.

Directorate for Statistical Services
Office of Secretary of Defense
7 August 1963

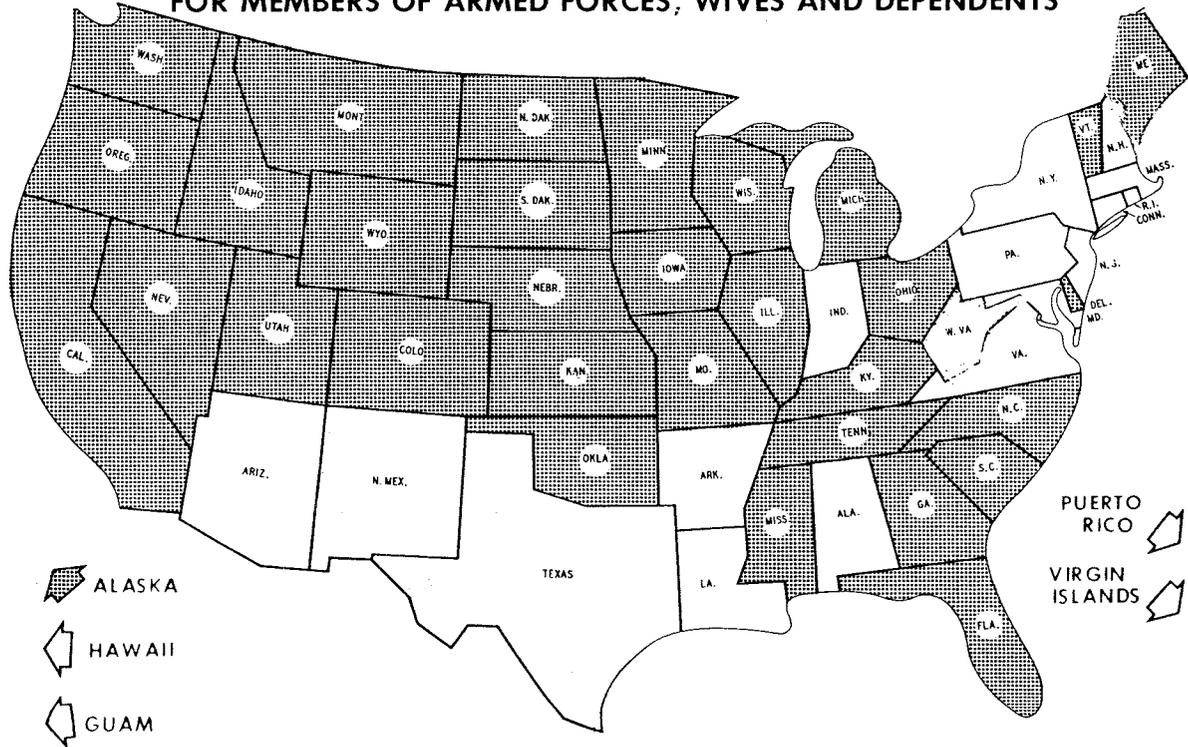
MAP 1

STATES WHICH HAVE MET ALL SUGGESTIONS OF PUBLIC LAW 296 FOR ALL CATEGORIES



MAP 2

STATES WHICH HAVE MET ALL SUGGESTIONS OF P.L. 296 FOR MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES, WIVES AND DEPENDENTS



MAP 5

STATES REQUIRING PAYMENT OF POLL TAX BY MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES

