FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1155

September 17, 2007

Honorable Jan Brewer
Secretary of State
7th Floor, State Capitol
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2808

Dear Secretary Brewer,

I would like to thank you for the work you and the state of Arizona have done over the past several years to promote and support the legislative initiatives the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has recommended. The 2006 elections pointed out the importance of the states enacting these legislative initiatives. In particular, the provision of 45 or more days for ballot transit; electronic transmission of Federal Post Card Applications, blank ballots, and voted ballots; and, authorization for the state chief election official to implement emergency measures. States with these provisions were able to support a greater number of situations faced by our brave men and women serving in combat areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and other U.S. citizens worldwide. I would ask you also to consider alternative methods that these citizens could use to request their absentee ballots such as phone, email or by proxy, and utilizing digital signatures with electronically transmitted materials.

After reviewing Arizona's existing election code and procedures, I have identified two initiatives that the Arizona legislature might consider during the upcoming legislative session. These initiatives are discussed in detail with suggested wording in the enclosed legislative initiatives document. If these initiatives are enacted and signed into law, they would significantly help to facilitate the absentee voting process for Arizona's citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. Information available to FVAP indicates that there are 21,293 Uniformed Services members, an estimated 15,970 family members and approximately 68,000 overseas citizens that claim Arizona as their voting residence.

As you review the enclosed initiatives for possible inclusion in Arizona's 2008 legislative agenda, please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance. We can provide legislative wording that other states have enacted to implement similar measures and provide written or in-person testimony, if desired. We have come a long way in simplifying the absentee voting process since the enactment of the *UOCAVA*—let's continue our joint efforts to achieve the simplest possible absentee voting process while maintaining its integrity.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Wiedmann
Deputy Director

Enclosure:
2008 Legislative Initiatives and Suggested Wording

Arizona 2008 Legislative Initiatives and Sample Language

The Need for 45-Day Ballot Transit Time

The most persistent problem which continues to face Arizona military and overseas voters is the extremely short period of time these voters have to receive, vote, and return their absentee ballots in order to be counted. While electronic transmission of election materials offers an alternative to inadequate ballot transit time in emergency situations, the fact is that insufficient ballot transit time through the mail remains the primary obstacle to ensuring timely delivery of absentee ballots to all who request them. Our post-election surveys and Postal Service statistics indicate that a **45-day transit time is needed** for absentee ballots sent through international mail or the military APO/ FPO (overseas) post offices. This round trip transit time is especially necessary because of the remote location of many military personnel and overseas citizens such as sailors and marines aboard ship, airmen and sailors at isolated tracking sites around the world, as well as Department of State personnel and citizen employees of American multinational corporations in remote areas.

Sample Language

For all elections, the official charged with the printing and distribution of ballots and election materials shall print as many absentee ballots as may be necessary as soon as possible after receiving the information concerning candidates and measures to be voted on at an election, and balloting materials shall be mailed not later than the 45th day before the election.

Expand Use of Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

- Use of FWAB as a Combined Request for Registration and Ballot Submission:

If the voter is residing outside the United States, or is a member of the United States Uniformed Services, merchant marine, or family member, and a qualified elector, he or she may use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) voter declaration as a request for registration simultaneously with the submission of the FWAB if:

> *(1) the information submitted complies with the registration requirements of the state;*
>
> *(2) the voter is otherwise eligible to vote absentee in the jurisdiction where the request is submitted; and*
>
> *(3) the request is received by the appropriate state election official not less than 30 days before the election or by the registration deadline established by the state.*