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Overseas and Military Voters Should Vote Now

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – For U.S. voters living abroad or deployed with the military, receiving and sending back an official ballot can be a challenge to successfully voting absentee. In fact, a recent study conducted by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) showed that the voting rate among overseas citizens in 2016 would have been over five times higher if these voters could register to vote and cast ballots as quickly and easily as voters living stateside.

From Oct. 1 to Oct. 8 during Absentee Voting Week, FVAP, U.S. military installations, embassies, consulates and overseas citizens groups will be reminding U.S. Service members, their families and overseas citizens to vote now — and helping them do so from anywhere in the world.

Fortunately, Congress provides these voters with special protections. Most registered overseas and military Service members who requested an absentee ballot should have received it by now, as election offices nationwide were required to send these voters their absentee ballots by Sept. 22. Those who do not receive their ballot in time to return it by their state’s deadline have the option of using a special backup ballot, the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB), available at FVAP.gov.

“Absentee voters should check their state voting deadlines, follow all ballot instructions and send back their ballot in plenty of time for it to arrive,” FVAP Director David Beirne said. “We encourage military and overseas voters to use the backup ballot at FVAP.gov if they are concerned about missing their state’s voting deadline.”

FVAP offers an interactive online tool that helps voters fill out their backup ballot. The tool saves time and improves accuracy by using the voter’s registration address to list all candidates for federal offices for that jurisdiction. Without the tool, voters must determine which candidates are running in their district and then manually write in the names. After filling out the backup ballot, voters must print, sign and send it to their election office. Voters who end up receiving an official ballot after sending in a backup ballot should still fill it out and send it back, as well. States will ensure only one ballot is counted per voter.

For voters who are just starting to think about the election, there is still time to register in many states. Voters can visit FVAP.gov for their state’s specific voter registration, ballot request and ballot submission deadlines.



The voting rights of 3 million U.S. citizens living overseas, as well as Service members and their eligible family members, are protected by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (UOCAVA). FVAP provides comprehensive information about overseas citizens here:

<https://www.fvap.gov/info/reports-surveys/overseas-citizen-population-analysis>. Information on the approximately 95 percent of U.S. military members who are eligible to vote absentee through the UOCAVA process (they are stationed away from their voting residence and polling place) is available here:

https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/PEVS_ADM_TechReport_Final.pdf,

For additional information, visit FVAP.gov, email vote@fvap.gov or call 1-800-438-VOTE (8683).

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Federal Voting Assistance Program

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is a Department of Defense (DoD) organization that works to ensure Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so — from anywhere in the world.

FVAP assists voters through partnerships with the military services, Department of State, Department of Justice, and election officials from the 50 states, U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. State and local governments administer U.S. elections, including those for federal offices. FVAP supports state and local election officials by providing absentee voting information, materials, training and guidance.

Voters can contact FVAP's call center at 703-588-1584 (toll free 1-800-438-VOTE or DSN 425-1584) or at vote@fvap.gov. Find FVAP on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP and follow [@FVAP](https://twitter.com/FVAP) on Twitter.