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## New Research: Reliability of International Mailing Systems Remains a Challenge for Many Overseas Voters

Alexandria, Va. — New research released by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) indicates the reliability of international mail systems remains a challenge for many (non-military) U.S. citizens attempting to vote from overseas. The amount of time it takes for election materials to travel between an election office and a voter living overseas has long been a challenge for absentee voters. The quality of a foreign country's postal system affects the time it takes for a ballot to be transmitted and returned.

"Our new research methodology for surveying overseas citizens enables us to investigate the unique barriers this understudied population still faces," FVAP Director Matt Boehmer said. "We've always recognized that international mailing systems, particularly those in developing countries, present challenges for overseas voters; however, we now can quantify the impact. We will use these findings to enhance outreach campaigns to encourage earlier submission of registration and ballot request forms and urge citizens to use the backup ballot if they don't receive their State ballot in time to return it by the deadline."

### Key findings from this research:

- Overseas citizens in countries with the most reliable postal systems are 65 percent more likely to have a vote recorded compared to those in countries with the lowest observed levels of postal reliability.
- In 2014, an estimated 17,000 ballots from U.S. citizens living overseas were not recorded as a result of foreign postal obstacles.
- Without any foreign postal obstacles, there would have been an estimated 15% more ballots recorded from developed countries and approximately 37% more ballots recorded from developing countries in 2014.

ESTIMATED BALLOTS NOT RECORDED

	All Countries	Reliable Postal Systems	Less Reliable Postal Systems
Ballots Recorded	91,542	74,621	16,920
Estimated Ballots Not Recorded	17,328	10,986	6,342



The Executive Summary, Research Note and associated infographic available at [https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/ResearchNoteInternationalMail\\_20161128\\_final.pdf](https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/ResearchNoteInternationalMail_20161128_final.pdf)

View the full Overseas Citizen Population Analysis report at <https://www.fvap.gov/info/reports-surveys/overseas-citizen-population-analysis>

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