NEW STUDY SHOWS HOW U.S. STATES AND TERRITORIES CAN IMPROVE MILITARY AND OVERSEAS INFORMATION ON THEIR WEBSITES

May 6, 2020 — Alexandria, Va. — Simple improvements can make absentee voting information on websites of the 55 U.S. states and territories easier to find and use by Service members, their eligible family, and U.S. citizens abroad covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).* For example, according to the study released by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), only one state website meets readability standards for the information provided for *UOCAVA* absentee voters.

UOCAVA INFORMATION ON MOST STATE SITES IS WRITTEN AT A COLLEGE LEVEL. **ONLY ONE** STATE MET IDEAL READABILITY STANDARDS.
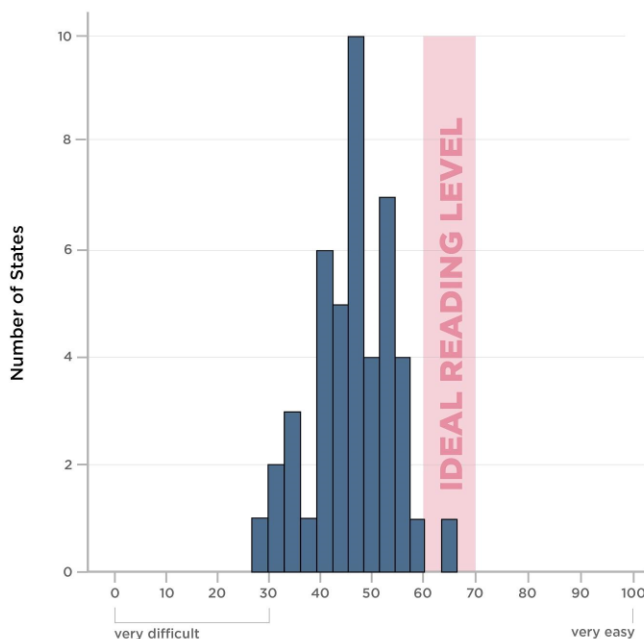
Flesch Reading Ease Score of State UOCAVA Web Pages

FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Every state and territory has specific absentee voting processes for *UOCAVA* voters, including use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote and request their ballot, the option to receive

their blank ballot electronically, and use of the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) if their official ballot does not arrive on time.

Requirements for voter registration and types of electronic transmission permitted (email, fax, online portals) vary by state. Whether voters can submit their ballots electronically also varies by state.

"Especially this year, when absentee voting may be delayed or disrupted by service reductions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that state election websites clearly communicate with all voters covered under *UOCAVA*," said FVAP Director David Beirne. "States and territories are welcome to use FVAP.gov as a resource for their *UOCAVA* content and to incorporate the best practices uncovered in our research."

FVAP assessed three aspects of *UOCAVA* information on state and territory websites: how quickly *UOCAVA* information could be located, adequacy of the website's information on registration and voting procedures, and how easy it was to understand and use the information. In most instances, a voter can quickly locate a state's UOCAVA information, but the website of a few states and territories, it takes long, about one and a half minutes. On average, state websites included 9 out of 11 key pieces of *UOCAVA* voting information, but finding and understanding the information was rated the most difficult of the three tasks.

States can improve their websites and help military and overseas voters by:
- Implementing search engine optimization strategies
- Making it easy to find *UOCAVA* information on election homepages and through menus
- Putting all *UOCAVA* information on one page
- Organizing information by how a voter would go through the process
- Using lists or tables to organize information
- Avoiding jargon and removing unnecessary content

The complete study can be found at https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/Assessing-State-UOCAVA-Web-Pages-FINAL.pdf

If you'd like more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or need help with the absentee voting process, please visit FVAP.gov for live chat assistance; call FVAP at 1-800-438-VOTE or DSN at (425) 1584 (CONUS)/(312) 425-1584 (OCONUS); or email vote@fvap.gov. Service members: Remember, you also can contact your unit or installation voting assistance officers. Don't forget to "like"

us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP and follow @FVAP on Twitter and @fvapgov on Instagram.