

**2010 Post Election Survey Report to Congress  
September 2011**

This report<sup>1</sup> has been prepared by the staff of the  
Federal Voting Assistance Program  
Washington, DC

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<sup>1</sup> Costs for preparing this report include DMDC survey preparation and execution, data analysis and deliverables at \$2.3million plus an additional estimated \$80,000 for FVAP data review and analysis, report preparation and finalization. Information from these surveys and this report are used for program analysis beyond this report.

## **Executive Summary**

The 2010 election saw significant improvements in military and overseas voting performance and opportunity. Military voter participation rates rose over 2006, the military voter registration rate remained very high despite it being a non-Presidential election year, numerous new State and federal voting assistance tools are now available to *UOCAVA* voters, and the States made substantial improvements to their legislation regarding military and overseas voting.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has transformed its scope and role, pursuing a much more aggressive communications and outreach program, providing easy to use tools for the voters, and partnering with numerous government agencies and organizations to leverage additional resources and provide a greater number of services directly to voters.

### ***Key Findings of Active Duty Military***

Because the active duty military (ADM) is a much more male and a much younger population than the U.S. citizen voting age population (CVAP) in general,<sup>2</sup> FVAP adjusts the ADM voter registration and participation rates demographically to produce rates comparable to the general U.S. Census National CVAP.<sup>3</sup> FVAP does this because historically, male and younger voters have lower participation rates, which drives down the voter participation rates of the military, all other things being equal.<sup>4</sup> Making this adjustment allows FVAP to use the voting experience of the overall American population as a benchmark against which to compare the experience of military voters, by controlling for age and sex differences.

Specific findings of the 2010 Post-Election Survey of the Active Duty Military include:

- In 2010, 85% active duty military (ADM) (adjusted for age and sex) were registered to vote.

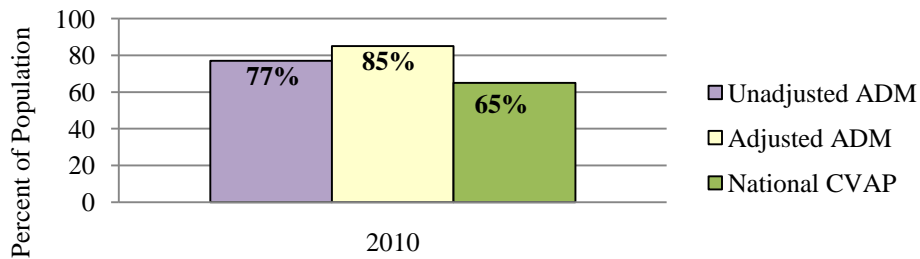
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<sup>2</sup> CVAP as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau *2008 Current Population Survey* (CPS)  
<http://www.census.gov/cps/>.

<sup>3</sup> The citizen voting age population (CVAP) is from the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey. For more information go to <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>.

<sup>4</sup> In 2008 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 63.6% of the civilian voting age population actually voted; whereas, only 49% of 18-24 year old males voted (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/index.html>). The Census Bureau also reported that 65.7% of women voted; whereas, 62% of men voted. Figures on participation by sex and age for the past five presidential elections are available on page 4 of this report.

Registration rates for unadjusted ADM, adjusted for age and sex  
ADM, national CVAP



- While the CVAP voter registration rate dropped 8.5% from 2008 to 2010 (which reflects the expected drop-off from a Presidential election year to a non-Presidential election year), the adjusted active duty military voter registration dropped by just 1.2%, less than one-third of the CVAP's drop.
- As a result, the adjusted ADM voter registration rate improved against the CVAP from the 2008 to 2010 elections, rising from 21.1% above the CVAP voter registration rate to 31% above the CVAP voter registration rate.

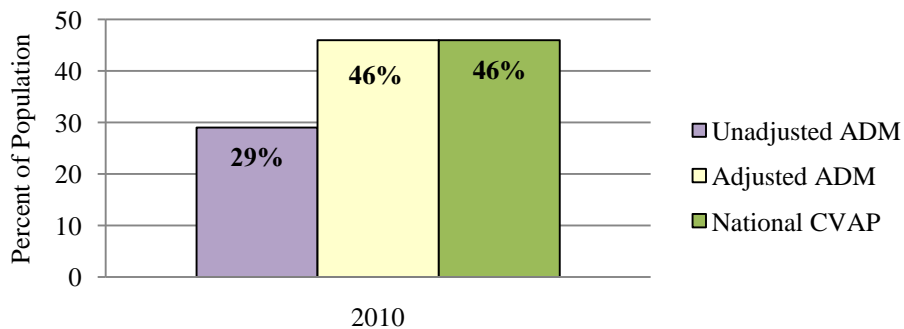
#### Voter Registration Rates

	2006	2008	2010	Percent Change (08 to 10)
<b>CVAP</b>	67.6%	71%	65%	-8.5%
<b>Unadjusted ADM</b>	NA*	77%	77%	No change
<b>Adjusted ADM</b>	NA*	86%	85%	-1.2%

\*In 2006 there is no survey question regarding "registration."

- In 2010, 46% of the active duty military participated in the election (adjusted for age and sex)

2010 Participation Rates for unadjusted ADM, adjusted for age and sex  
ADM, and national CVAP



- While the CVAP voter participation rate dropped 4.8% from 2006 to 2010 (comparing non-Presidential election years), both the adjusted and unadjusted active duty military voter participation rates rose significantly.
- Further, the adjusted active duty military voter participation rate improved dramatically against the CVAP voter participation rate from 2006 to 2010, from

10% less than the CVAP rate in 2006 to 1% higher in 2010, both non-Presidential election years.

#### Voter Participation Rates

	2006	2010	Percent Change (2006 to 2010)
<b>CVAP</b>	47.8%	45.5%	-4.8%
<b>Unadjusted ADM</b>	24.0%	29.0%	+21%
<b>Adjusted ADM</b>	43.0%	46.0%	+7.0%

Given the continuation of the same survey methodology between the 2006, 2008, and 2010 post-election surveys, the fact that voter registration remained essentially the same between a Presidential election year and a non-Presidential election year, compared to a marked drop in the CVAP voter registration rate, suggests the overall military voting assistance program is providing effective registration assistance.

Further, a 21% increase in the unadjusted active duty military voter participation rate between 2006 and 2010 (both non-Presidential election years) – while the Census reports that the CVAP voter participation rate dropped – is remarkable. Given the only significant difference between the two elections was the passage of the *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE Act)* of 2009, its requirement for 45-day prior and electronic ballot delivery, as well as its requirements for more electronic voting tools for *UOCAVA* voters and expedited ballot return for overseas military voters, likely indicates the *MOVE Act* requirements substantially improved the opportunity for active duty military voters to successfully cast a ballot.

Unfortunately, 29% of active duty military voters indicated they never received the absentee ballot they requested, up from 16% in 2008. That represents approximately 120,000 active duty military personnel who never received their absentee ballot.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, while voting assistance utilization dropped between 2008 and 2010, it dropped at a slower pace than the drop in election interest, voting plans, and voter participation rates, indicating a higher per voter utilization rate of voting assistance, which is an important distinction given the wide variance in voter interest between Presidential elections (like 2008) and non-Presidential elections (like 2010). Further, voter awareness and knowledge of voter assistance programs rose by about 24% in just this one election cycle. Voter awareness of available voting assistance is still unacceptably low, but has improved dramatically in just two years.

#### *Key Findings of Spouses of Active Duty Military*

In addition to surveying active duty military, FVAP surveyed active duty military spouses, overseas citizens, voting assistance officers, and local election officials. In 2010, key findings from the survey of spouses of active duty military include the following:

- 83% of the spouses of active duty military were registered to vote;

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<sup>5</sup> Comparisons between Presidential and non-Presidential election years can be difficult because participation rates are much higher in Presidential contests.

- When adjusted for age and sex, the spousal voter participation rate was 52% compared to 45.5% for the CVAP; and,
- While about one-third of active duty military voters voted in person during the 2010 general election, about 60% of spouses of active duty military voters voted in person.

### ***Key Findings of Overseas Citizens***

Measuring registration and participation among overseas civilians is difficult because we don't know how many American voters live overseas, nor can we contact a random sample of them for survey purposes. Because of that, it is difficult to evaluate scientifically the voting behavior of overseas citizens.

However, as with the 2008 report, FVAP is able to determine some elements of overseas citizen voting behavior from its survey of local election officials (LEO). From that LEO data, 45% of the registered and eligible to vote overseas citizens participated in the 2010 election.

### ***Key Findings of Local Election Officials***

53% of the approximately 7,296 election jurisdictions nationwide participated in FVAP's survey. The Defense Manpower Data Center statistically adjusted those results to compensate for the significant concentration of *UOCAVA* voting activity in the largest jurisdictions, which make up only 16% of the total jurisdictions, but transmitted 94% of the total ballots.

44% of jurisdictions indicated they did not start transmitting ballots to *UOCAVA* voters until after the 45-day prior deadline. What is not known is whether this was because they missed the deadline for timely applications by *UOCAVA* voters, or whether they received their first *UOCAVA* absentee ballot applications after the 45-day prior deadline. Unfortunately, given the concentration of *UOCAVA* activity in the largest election jurisdictions, 22% of those largest jurisdictions also reported sending out their first ballots after the 45-day prior requirement. Given the large number of ballot applications for these jurisdictions, it is logical to assume they did have timely *UOCAVA* absentee ballot applications that were not transmitted on time.

While 5% of the regular absentee ballots returned by *UOCAVA* voters were rejected, 38% of the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots (FWAB) were rejected; 44% of those FWAB rejections were because there was no absentee ballot application on file.

### ***Conclusion***

Given the continuation of the same survey methodology between the 2006, 2008, and 2010 post-election surveys, the fact active duty military voter registration remained essentially the same between a Presidential election year and a non-Presidential election year, while the CVAP voter registration rate dropped markedly, may indicate the overall military voting assistance program is providing sufficient, if not improved, voter registration assistance.

Further, a 21% increase in the unadjusted active duty military voter participation rate between 2006 and 2010 (both non-Presidential election years), while the CVAP voter participation rate dropped, is remarkable, and may indicate the 45-day prior ballot transmission,

electronic ballot transmission, and expedited ballot return of overseas military ballot requirements of the *MOVE Act*, have substantially improved the opportunity for active duty military voters to successfully cast a ballot.

While the participation rate increased, the primary reason ballots were rejected is that they were received by the local or State election official after the absentee ballot return deadline. States should keep this in mind when selecting dates for primaries and mailing ballots, and would be well advised to consider electronic options for military and overseas voters.

Finally the Department saw substantially greater State and local adoption of FVAP-sponsored electronic ballot delivery systems, as well as substantially greater voter utilization of such systems, likely because the systems were tailored to individual State requirements rather than to a single federally-designed system, as had been the norm in past FVAP-sponsored projects. However, while the FVAP-sponsored ballot delivery system had approximately 3,500 ballot downloads across 17 States (about 200 per State), two States that ran their own systems, Maryland and Michigan, had 1,125 and at least 859 ballots downloaded, respectively (almost 1,000 per State). Given this five times greater ballot download rate for States that ran their own systems, the ability to more fully integrate with existing State voter registration databases and election management systems likely indicates that even greater State control is needed for future FVAP-sponsored electronic voting support systems.

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**\*All appendices can be found at the FVAP website or can be requested on CD at the contact points on the cover of this report.**

## I. Introduction

This is the post election report on Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting for the President and Congress, and covers the time period from November 2008 through November 2010, with a focus on the November 2010 election. The State-federal cooperation and voting assistance program sections include data from 2011, in order to provide current information on legislative initiatives and the Department of Defense (DoD) voting projects.

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 1973ff et seq.), and sections 1566 and 1566a of title 10, U.S. Code, provides the authority for federal voting assistance programs for uniformed services and overseas citizen voters. Under *UOCAVA*, the President designates the head of a federal department or agency to administer federal voting assistance responsibilities. The 1988 Executive Order 12642 named the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential Designee for administering the *UOCAVA*. According to Department of Defense Directive 1000.04, the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness), (with further delegation to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program [FVAP]), is delegated those Presidential Designee responsibilities.

Executive Branch departments and agencies with employees overseas provide voting assistance under guidance from the Presidential designee. These departments and agencies utilize informational materials and services provided by FVAP. The Department of State (DoS), through its embassies/consulates, provides absentee voting information and assistance to U.S. citizens outside the United States. In addition, U.S. embassies/consulates, in selected areas, make the diplomatic pouch available to citizens for sending election materials back to the United States.

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and the DoD Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) facilitate the physical transmission of election materials between the voter and local election officials. The U.S. Attorney General in the Department of Justice (DoJ) maintains sole and exclusive enforcement authority of the provisions of the *UOCAVA*.

### I.a. The Law and the Requirements

In October 2009, *UOCAVA* was substantially amended by the *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE Act)* which was enacted as part of the *FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)*. Among its provisions, the *MOVE Act*:

- Requires States to transmit ballots at least 45 days before federal elections;
- Requires States to transmit voting information and blank ballots electronically;
- Expands the use of the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot to all federal elections;
- Prohibits outdated notarization requirements;
- Requires the Services to establish expanded voting assistance through Installation Voter Assistance Offices (IVA Offices), and authorizes the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Service Secretaries to designate those IVA Offices as voter registration facilities under Section 7(a)(2) of the *National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)*; and
- Requires the Department of Defense to field a number of electronic voting support systems for military and overseas voters.

Every year the Presidential Designee will present to the President and the relevant committees a report (42 USC 1973ff-4A(b)) to include:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of the Department's overall voting assistance programs,
- A separate assessment of voter registration and participation by absent uniformed services voters,
- A separate assessment of voter registration and participation by overseas voters who are not members of the uniformed services,
- A description of the cooperation between States and the federal government,
- A description of the utilization of the Installation Voter Assistance Offices, including:
  - A description of the specific programs implemented by each military department of the Armed Forces, and
  - the number of absent uniformed services voters who utilized Installation Voter Assistance Offices

## **I.b. Previous Research**

FVAP has produced eighteen previous reports on *UOCAVA* absentee voting in general elections to the President and Congress. Prior to this report, such reports were only written after Presidential elections. This is the first report to Congress on post-election analysis of a non-Presidential general federal election.

Many other organizations have produced reports on *UOCAVA* absentee voting in general elections as well; however, the methods used by those entities to collect the data are different from those used by FVAP. Some of those reports have been based on simple surveys, opt-in surveys, and censuses of entire populations which do not adjust for incomplete response rates. In addition some reports do not fully adjust their results to reflect the true demographics of the military.<sup>6</sup>

In addition some reports do not provide the adjusted results, as FVAP does here, that allow for a direct comparison to the general voting population. This adjustment is critical when programs, policies and legislation intended to assist military voters in casting their ballots are being evaluated.

For example, the 45 year old and older population is 54% of the general electorate, but only 6% of the military population. Meanwhile, the military 18-24 year old population is 33% of the total military, but 13% of the general population.

In the general population, the voter participation rate is 21% for 18-24 year olds, and 56% for individuals aged 45 and above. If adjustments are not made for these substantial age and sex differences, declarative ratios of the relative likelihood of successfully voting are

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<sup>6</sup> Military Voting in 2010: A Step Forward, But A Long Way to Go. Eric Eversole. Available at [www.mvpproject.org/MVPPProject\\_study\\_download.pdf](http://www.mvpproject.org/MVPPProject_study_download.pdf). Moving Forward: 2010 OVF Post Election UOCAVA Survey Report and Analysis. Claire M. Smith. Available at [www.overseasvotefoundation.org/files/OVF\\_2010\\_Post\\_Election\\_Survey\\_Report.pdf](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/files/OVF_2010_Post_Election_Survey_Report.pdf).

statistically inconsistent. It will also be nearly impossible, using such unadjusted voter participation rate comparisons, for the military voter participation rate to ever approach that of the general population, given the skewing of each population towards the end of the voting age cohorts. Because of this, there has been no consistently agreed upon source for authoritative information for data on *UOCAVA* voter data.

In 2006 FVAP undertook a significant effort to improve its data collection and analytical methods for the Post Election Survey by shifting its post-election survey process to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) to leverage that agency's extensive experience in fielding and analyzing the Status of Forces Survey methodology as the baseline for conducting the military portion of this report. Lessons learned from that process have also influenced the design and deployment of the other post-election surveys.

To compare with the 2010 post-election survey data, FVAP and DMDC reviewed and adjusted the 2006 active duty military post-election survey data to allow for comparative trend analysis. This trend analysis can only extend to several questions and several years because the wordings of some of the 2006 questions are slightly different than the 2010 questions and because survey data from quadrennial FVAP surveys prior to 2006 are not currently comparable. To improve future trend analysis capability, FVAP and DMDC are trying to maintain standard questions from survey to survey.

#### **I.b.i. Comparison of FVAP-collected and the Election Assistance Commission-collected *UOCAVA* Data**

This report's survey data, especially surveys of Local Election Officials (LEO), tracks closely with that reported in the Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) Election Administration and Voting survey.

The *Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)*, 42 U.S.C. 15301, *et seq*, mandates that after each regularly scheduled general election for federal office, the EAC shall collect comprehensive data from the States on all of the ballots sent and received by *UOCAVA* voters. In the fall of 2011, the EAC will release its fourth report to Congress.

However, the *MOVE Act* amended *UOCAVA* reporting requirements and superseded that separate EAC reporting requirement by incorporating it into a new over-arching Presidential Designee-defined data collection and reporting process.<sup>7</sup> This new process should even obviate the continuation of the separate EAC report from the FVAP report, which the Administration has already recommended to Congress in its 2011 Legislative Change Proposals.

Legislation states that FVAP will work with the EAC and the chief State election official of each State to develop standards for reporting data on the number of absentee ballots transmitted and received and other data FVAP determines appropriate, and that FVAP will store the data reported.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> 42 U.S.C. 1973ff(b)(11)

<sup>8</sup> 42 U.S.C. 1973ff(b)(11)

Accordingly, the process begun in 2008 for consolidating the collection of data from local and State election officials to a single *UOCAVA* data collection procedure is still under way.

However, the FVAP 2008 report contained a new analytical section defining the comparative failure of *UOCAVA* voters to CVAP voters at each stage of the voting process.<sup>9</sup> That is an important analytical tool in that it showed how the overwhelming incidence of *UOCAVA* voting failure was in failures of ballot delivery and return, not registration or absentee ballot applications. That analysis used the CVAP failure rates for each comparable stage of the process to compare to *UOCAVA* failure rates, and that CVAP data was from the EAC Election Administration and Voting Survey Report.

The finalized 2010 State-reported EAC 2010 Election Administration and Voting Survey Report is not available as of the writing of this report. When the EAC releases its 2010 data, FVAP will release an addendum to this report to provide that analysis for 2010.

### **I.c. The *UOCAVA* absentee voting process**

For active duty military and overseas civilians, absentee voting requires time and effort, and is more complicated than the domestic absentee voting process. Voters register and request a ballot, receive it, vote it, and then return it. In doing so, they must navigate the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process which is different for each of the fifty States, the four territories, and the District of Columbia. However, the November 2, 2010 general federal election was the first election subject to *MOVE Act*'s requirements for the 45-day transit time and making ballots available online, providing the first opportunity to see what effect the *MOVE Act* had on *UOCAVA* voters' success in returning their voted ballots and having them counted.

After a *UOCAVA* voter submits a registration and absentee ballot application, the LEO receives and processes the form and sends a blank absentee ballot to the voter, and then later upon receipt of the voted ballot, either counts or rejects it. Voters have access to assistance through the military Services and the Department of State's Voting Assistance Officers (VAO), online and printed absentee voting information, and services provided by the FVAP. VAOs share information with voters on how to register, request, receive and return absentee ballots. The voter, LEOs, and VAOs, all play important roles in the process, and accordingly, all are surveyed and analyzed separately in this report.

The *UOCAVA* absentee voting process begins with the voter, but it is important to consider all factors that go into the voting process and how much time it takes. Mailed voting materials go from a voter's home, duty station, Embassy or consulate to the local U.S. or foreign post office or the Military Postal Service (MPS), and then to a United States Postal Service (USPS) Processing & Distribution Center. Voting materials sent by LEOs follow the reverse process, but mail traveling through the Military Postal Service, must first be transferred from the USPS to the Military Postal Service through one of the three USPS International Gateways in Miami, New York City or San Francisco. Total one-way transit time could be from as little as three days to as long as thirty, or forty, days. Once a voter receives the ballot, he or she

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<sup>9</sup> 2008 FVAP Post Election Report. <http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/18threport.pdf>. page 4

completes and returns it to the LEO – an action which could take as long, if not longer, to make it back through the multiple postal systems to the LEO.

Because of these factors, mail transit time is the most important factor in determining when voting materials should be mailed, both by the voter and by the LEO. If an absentee voter has not begun the registration and absentee ballot request process early enough, the voter may not receive his or her ballot package in time for the election. Further delays could occur if the application contains errors or omissions. For example, deployed active duty Servicemembers may not return for weeks to the operating bases holding their mail, which may include voting materials. Additionally, if a LEO cannot process the application for some reason, more time will be required to contact the voter and obtain the correct information to successfully process the form.

### **I.c.i. Where the absentee voting process fails**

In 2008 FVAP introduced “voting failure” analysis to properly determine where voting assistance resources and efforts should be concentrated. Voting failure is defined as the difference between the success or failure rate experienced by *UOCAVA* voters for a particular stage of the voting process (such as registration, absentee ballot application, receiving a ballot, returning a ballot in time, and having a successfully cast vote be counted) compared to that experienced by national voters for the same stage of the voting process. Once more voting data is available from the EAC report, FVAP will adjust the absentee ballot return rates for age and sex, where appropriate.<sup>10</sup>

FVAP was able to calculate this rate based on a national rejection rate that was calculated with data from the Election Assistance Commission survey. FVAP cannot currently calculate the 2010 voting failure because the EAC is not ready to release the comparable national electorate data against which the *UOCAVA* voter failure rates are compared. However, once the EAC data is released for a national rejection rate, FVAP will reevaluate the data and provide the voting failure rates for 2010.

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<sup>10</sup> The comparison cannot be made perfect: research indicates that absentee civilian voters in the United States tend to be older, more educated and more likely to vote anyway than military absentee voters, who have no other choice. At least some of the increased failure rate among military absentee voters may be due to demographic differences between the military and the general population. FVAP is continuing to seek ways to better compare absentee voting among military members with overall absentee voting.

## II. FVAP Post Election Survey

The FVAP and the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) surveyed six *UOCAVA* populations in preparation for this report.<sup>11</sup> DMDC used industry standards in developing and administering the six surveys. Each *UOCAVA* population received pre-notification letters and/or emails; notification letters and/or emails; and several follow up thank you/reminder letters.

The complete DMDC statistical methodology reports for each population can be found in the attached appendices and on the FVAP website ([www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)). Table 1 shows the mode of administration, approximate sample size, and response rate for the Active Duty Military (ADM), Spouses of Active Duty Military, Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs), Overseas Citizens, Department of State VAOs (DoS VAO), and Local Election Officials (LEO) surveys.

The response rates for many of these surveys are not much higher than the response rates for the 2004 survey, which the Government Accountability Office (GAO) criticized as being too low.<sup>12</sup> Historically, response rates have been used as a primary indicator of survey quality. However, recent research shows no strong relationship between a survey's nonresponse rate and the nonresponse biases of its estimates.<sup>13</sup> DMDC's statistically advanced weighting methods, and exceptionally granular stratification of the survey populations, reduce much of the potential bias in survey estimates that may result from survey nonresponse. Therefore, response rates by themselves are not sufficient rationale to accept or reject the results of a survey.

Table 1.

*Survey Mode, Sample Size, and Response Rate by Population*

Population	Mode of Administration	Approximate Sample Size	Weighted Response Rate
Active Duty Military	Web-only	73,244	15%
Unit VAOs	Web-only	9,907	20%
Active Duty Military Spouses	Web/paper	50,132	14%
Overseas Citizens	Web only paper	47,879	5%*
DoS VAOs	Web-only	238	90%
Local Election Officials	Web/paper	7,296	53%**

\*response rate for overseas citizens is not weighted. The 5 % is an observed response rate.

\*\*FVAP conducted a census of the LEO population, DoS VAOs and Unit VAOs.

<sup>11</sup> The six populations include the following: Local Election Officials, Voting Assistance Officers (Department of State and Military), Active Duty Military, Spouses of Active Duty Military and all Overseas Citizens

<sup>12</sup> GAO-06-521/April 2006. Elections. Absentee Voting Assistance to Military and Overseas Citizens increased for the 2004 General Election, but Challenges Remain.

<sup>13</sup> Groves, Robert M (2006) "Nonresponse Rates and Nonresponse Bias in Household Surveys" *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol 70, number 5, pp 646-675



## II.a. Statistical Analysis of Uniformed Services Voter Interest and Participation

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* covers active duty members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, and members of the Reserve component population in the Active Guard/Reserve (AGR/FTS/AR) or who were currently activated on November 2, 2010 and living abroad as well as the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, their family members, and U.S. citizens residing outside of the United States. .

### II.a.i. Studying the Active Duty Military Voter<sup>14</sup>

Many military voting observers make direct comparisons between active duty military voter participation rates and general public voter participation. They find a lower reported active duty voter participation rate and declare the military voting system broken. Aggregate voter participation rates are a poor measure of military voter success because of the significant demographic differences between the U.S. military and national voting populations. When observers compare the raw data, the fundamental problems in military voting can be misdiagnosed.<sup>15</sup> This is the case in the 2008 Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Election Administration and Voting Survey Report on *UOCAVA* voting.<sup>16</sup>

The EAC data does not capture the one-third of military voters or three-fifths of active duty military spouse voters who vote in-person at polling locations, nor does the report adjust for jurisdiction size or non-response of individual election jurisdictions within States.<sup>17</sup> Because of that, the FVAP survey data reported far greater *UOCAVA* voter activity than the EAC data was able to include. For example, the FVAP survey reported 767,773 absentee ballots were sent to uniformed services voters in 2008, but the EAC reported only 480,757 ballots were transmitted a 60% difference. Similarly, the 2008 FVAP survey reported 491,889 ballots returned by uniformed services voters, compared to just 320,950 in the EAC report, a 53% difference.

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<sup>14</sup> Information presented in this section is taken from the 2010 FVAP survey of active duty military. Information on the general population is pulled from Census Bureau 2010 Current Population Survey, [dataferrett.census.gov](http://dataferrett.census.gov).

<sup>15</sup> Data from the EAC reports was previously used in the following reports: Military Voting in 2010 available at [http://www.mvpproject.org/MVPPProject\\_study\\_download.pdf](http://www.mvpproject.org/MVPPProject_study_download.pdf), America's Military Voters in 2009 available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/07/americas-military-voters-re-enfranchising-the-disenfranchised>, and Registering Military and Overseas Citizens to Vote available at [http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/registering\\_overseas\\_and\\_military\\_citizens\\_to\\_vote/](http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/registering_overseas_and_military_citizens_to_vote/)

<sup>16</sup> The methodological differences between the EAC 2008 Election Administration and Voting Survey reports on *UOCAVA* voting, and the FVAP post-election survey reports, were detailed in Appendix XVIII to FVAP's 2008 Post-Election Survey Report. The 2008 Post Election Survey Report can be found at <http://www.fvap.gov/reference/18threport.html>.

<sup>17</sup> For example, in 2008, out of more than 5,000 election jurisdictions reporting data in the EAC 2008 report, 50% of the *UOCAVA* ballots were transmitted by just 91 of those jurisdictions, and 75% of the ballots were transmitted by about 320 of the jurisdictions. Further, some States with large *UOCAVA* voting populations (for example, Illinois) did not differentiate between ballots transmitted to, or returned from uniformed services and overseas citizen voters. Yet the EAC report did not adjust for that non-response, instead effectively classifying such lack of differentiation as ballots never transmitted or ballots unsuccessfully returned. FVAP has once again refined its methodology to include weighting and adjustments and added a non-response study to its post-survey repertoire. The non-response study will help FVAP determine the characteristics of survey respondents as well as those who choose not to participate.

Another element that drives down apparent active duty military voter registration rates is the reporting by States to the EAC of total registrations and absentee ballot request applications received by local election officials from uniformed services voters (which, by *UOCAVA* definition, includes both active duty military voters absent from their voting jurisdiction, and similarly absent spouses of military personnel). It appears that most election jurisdictions identify *UOCAVA* voters by the submission of an FPCA. But the FVAP 2010 surveys of both active duty military and spouses indicates many voters use State or local forms to register and request an absentee ballot, and therefore may be counted as general electorate voters, not *UOCAVA* voters; 38% of active duty military voters and 73% of active duty military spouse voters used a form other than the FPCA.<sup>18</sup>

Military dependents of voting age make up 1.1 million of the total 2.5 million voters captured under the Uniformed Services Voter designation of *UOCAVA*.<sup>19</sup> Many reports that rely on the State-reported EAC Election Administration and Voting Survey data for analysis of the effectiveness of Department of Defense voting assistance programs use a total uniformed service voter population of 2.5 million, but do not account for the sizable portions of Uniformed Service populations who are not absentee voters (and therefore not covered by *UOCAVA*), or who obtain their absentee ballots through State or local processes outside the federally defined process. Such methodological shortcomings fail to account for up to half of the total *UOCAVA* voter activity, and under-report voting behavior of military voters, as well as under-report the effective work done by State and local election officials.<sup>20</sup>

A better measure of military voting success is whether or not a military voter has the same probability of successfully casting a ballot as any other absentee voter, adjusting for age cohort<sup>21</sup> and State of voting jurisdiction.

As discussed above, this report cannot completely analyze relative voting success between military voters and CVAP voters in the general electorate because the EAC overall Election Administration and Voting Report Survey data are unavailable. Such broader analysis will be provided throughout the following year as data are made available. This report compares the survey results of the active duty military from 2006, 2008, and 2010 and also compares those results, on an age- and sex-adjusted basis, to the post-election survey results by the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey for those same elections.

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<sup>18</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 34. 2010 Post Election Survey of Spouses of Active Duty Military question 20.

<sup>19</sup> *UOCAVA* defines Uniformed Service Voters as active duty military personnel (including the Coast Guard), members of the U.S. Public Health Service, the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency, the U.S. Merchant Marine, and the voting age dependents of these Servicemen and women, who are absent from their voting jurisdiction because of that uniformed service.

<sup>20</sup> Data from the EAC reports was previously used in the following reports: Military Voting in 2010 available at [http://www.mvpproject.org/MVPPProject\\_study\\_download.pdf](http://www.mvpproject.org/MVPPProject_study_download.pdf), America's Military Voters in 2009 available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/07/americas-military-voters-re-enfranchising-the-disenfranchised>, and Registering Military and Overseas Citizens to Vote available at [http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/registering\\_overseas\\_and\\_military\\_citizens\\_to\\_vote/](http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/registering_overseas_and_military_citizens_to_vote/)

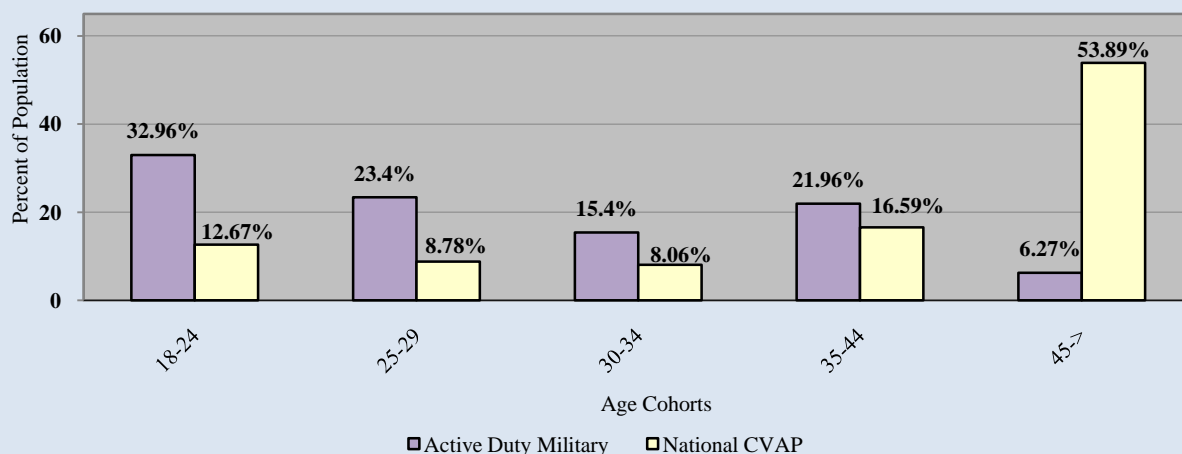
<sup>21</sup> Cohort - a group of people sharing a common factor such as the same age or the same income bracket, especially in a statistical survey.

## II.a.ii. The Active Duty Military Voting Population as Compared to the National Civilian Voting Age Population<sup>22</sup>

The active duty military (ADM) is younger and the percentage of males is greater than the national Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP). Figure 1 details those age differences between the national CVAP and the active duty military.<sup>23</sup>

- 18-24 year olds represent 33% of active duty military but only 13% of the national CVAP.
- Combined 18-29 year olds represent 56% of the active duty military but only 21% of the CVAP.
- 6% of the military is over 45 years of age, but 54% of the CVAP is 45 years old or older.
- Similarly, the combined 35 years old and over cohort represents 28% of the active duty military, but 70% of the CVAP.

**Figure 1: 2010 Age comparisons of the Active Duty Military (ADM) to National Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP)**



Because 86% of the active duty military is male and only 14% female (compared to the national CVAP distribution of 48% male and 52% female, as Figure 2 details), nominal registration and voter participation rates for active duty military will likely appear lower if not adjusted for those substantial differences.

<sup>22</sup> Information presented in this section is taken from the 2010 FVAP survey of active duty military. Information on the general population is pulled from Census Bureau 2010 Current Population Survey, [dataferrett.census.gov](http://dataferrett.census.gov).

<sup>23</sup> The citizen voting age population (CVAP) as defined by U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, [www.dataferrett.Census.gov](http://www.dataferrett.Census.gov)

**Figure 2: 2010 Sex Comparison between ADM and national CVAP**

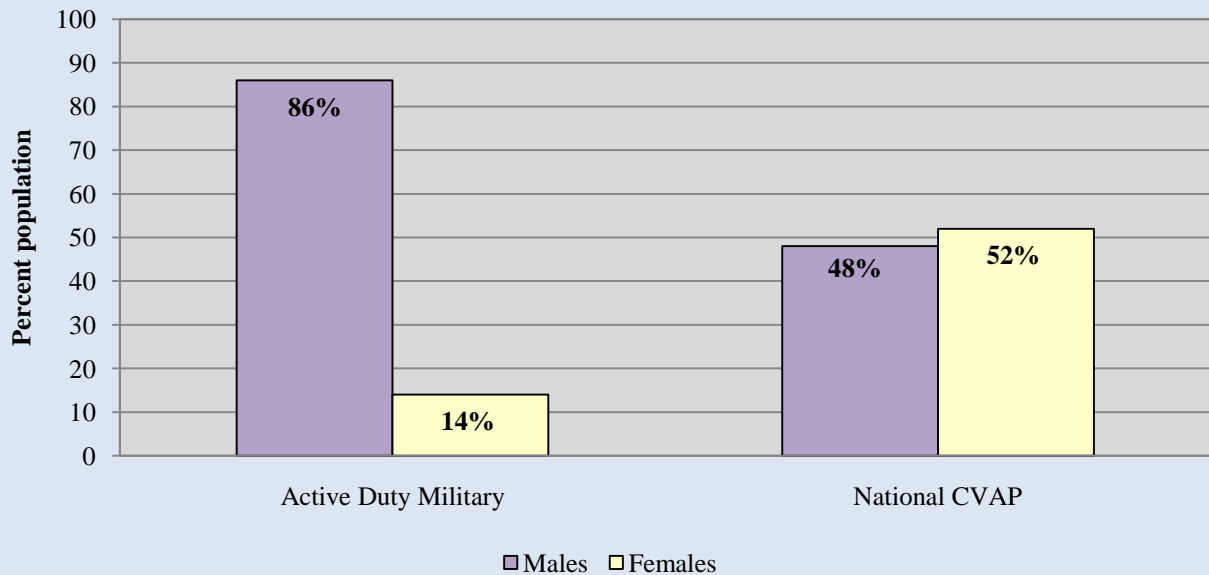
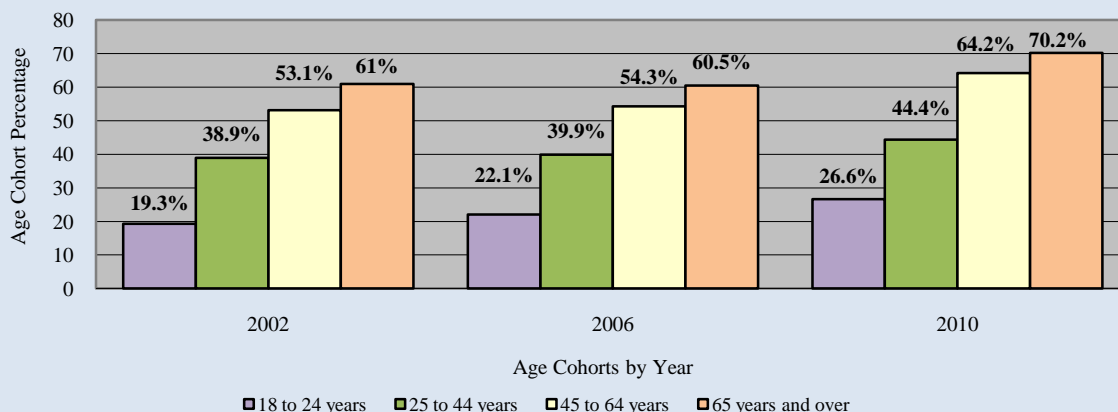


Figure 3<sup>24</sup> details why making these adjustments between the age distribution for national CVAP voters and active duty military voters is so important – historically, the national voter participation rate for 18-24 year olds is about one-third lower than the voter participation rate for those aged 45 and older. Therefore, because the active duty military is weighted in age and sex toward populations with historically lower voter participation rates,<sup>25</sup> without proper demographic adjustment the active duty military voter participation rate will appear lower than it should when compared to national voter participation rates. Instead, active duty military voter registration and participation rates should be compared against equivalent national CVAP age groups. This adjustment is critical when programs, policies and legislation intended to assist military voters in casting their ballots are being evaluated.

<sup>24</sup> Active Duty Military numbers from the 2010 Post Election Survey; CVAP numbers are from [www.dataferrett.Census.gov](http://www.dataferrett.Census.gov)

<sup>25</sup> More information can be found at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/index.html>.

**Figure 3: Voting participation rates of national CVAP for years 2002 through 2010, by Age**



### II.a.iii. Registration and Participation: the Active Duty Military Voter as Compared to the National Civilian Voting Age Population

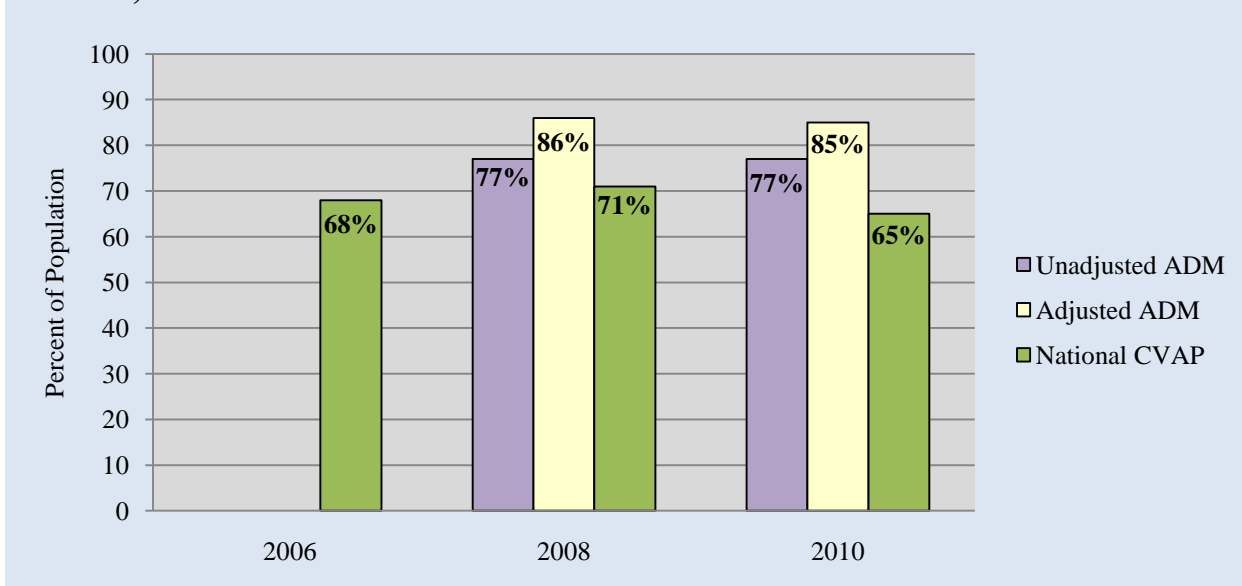
For the 2010 general election, the registration rate for the national citizen voting age population (CVAP) was 65%<sup>26</sup> compared to an unadjusted voter registration rate of 77% for active duty military (Figure 4).<sup>27</sup> Figure 5<sup>28</sup> illustrates a breakdown by age of the active duty military (both unadjusted to the CVAP demographics and adjusted), and the CVAP. Notably, the active duty military enjoys higher voter registration rates than the CVAP under either method.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, November 2010, <http://dataferrett.census.gov>. [www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/ondex.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/ondex.html), historical CPS time series table A-1.

<sup>27</sup> 2010 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 14. The 2008 ADM does not include Reserves.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, November 2010, <http://dataferret.census.gov>; 2010 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military; Appendix C: Adjusted 2010 Active Duty Military Data.

**Figure 4: Registration rates for unadjusted ADM, adjusted for age and sex ADM, national CVAP**

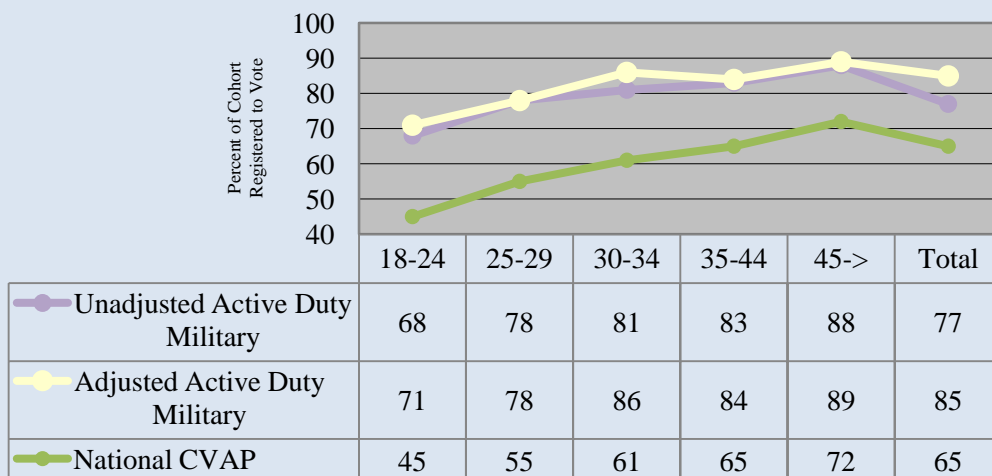


Figures 5 and 6 show some trend analysis between 2006, 2008, and 2010. However, trend analysis with previous FVAP surveys can be made with the 2006 post-election survey for voter participation rates only,<sup>29</sup> but with the 2008 survey, for both voter registration and voter participation rates.<sup>30</sup> The 2006, 2008, and 2010 post-election surveys all use the same widely accepted Status of Forces Survey methodology, and repeat the same questions in order to allow for a comparison of trends. Given that methodological uniformity, it is notable that while the CVAP voter registration rate dropped from 71% to 65% between the 2008 and 2010 elections, the active duty military voter registration remained stable at 77% (see Figure 4).

<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, the 2006 post-election survey, the first to use the Status of Forces Survey methodology, did not ask active duty military voters if they had registered to vote, only if they had voted, and if so, by what method.

<sup>30</sup> FVAP is attempting to address the methodological flaws in its 2004 and prior surveys to allow for trend analysis back into the 1990s, but that data normalization is still ongoing.

**Figure 5: 2010 Registration rates for unadjusted ADM, adjusted for Age and Sex ADM, and national CVAP, by Age**



The 2010 Active Duty Military Survey data shows that nominally, 77% of active duty military are registered to vote and 29% of them participated in the 2010 election.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 2: Voter Participation Method\*<sup>32</sup>**

Method of Voting	2006	2010	Percent Change
Absentee Ballot	16%	18%	12.5%
In-person	7%	11%	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>

\*Numbers are not adjusted for age and sex.

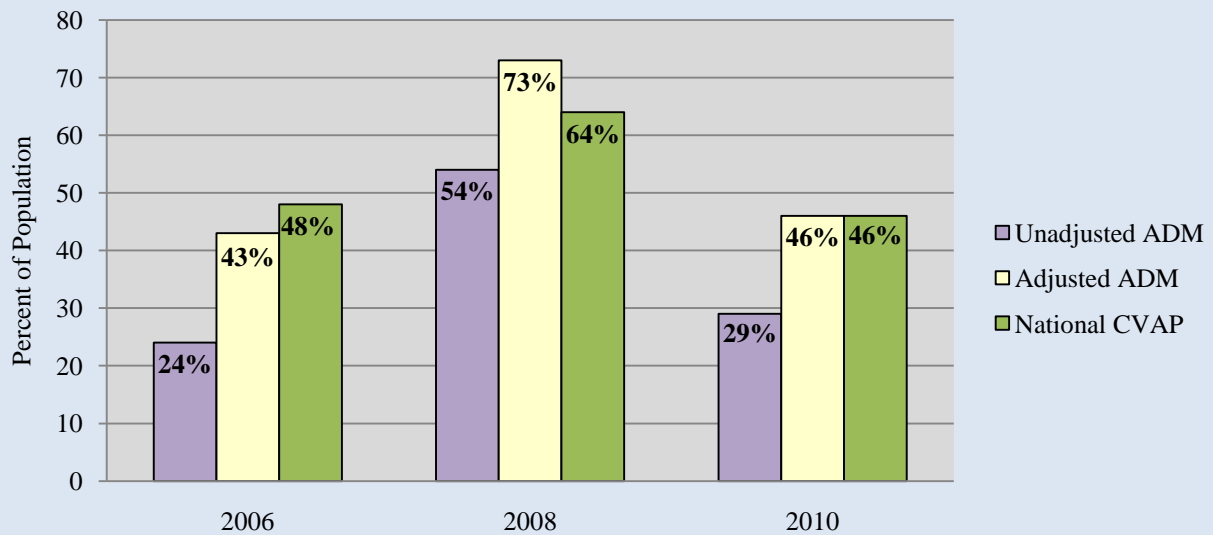
The active duty military not only enjoyed higher voter registration rates, but they also experienced higher age and sex-adjusted voter participation rates (except in the 18-24 age group, as shown in Figure 7 below). The 2010 Active Duty Military Survey data shows that nominally, 29% of the active duty military participated in the 2010 election.<sup>33</sup> Of note, the 2010 survey continues the trend seen since 2006 of approximately one-third of all active duty military voters voting in person. Table 2 details the breakdown in method of voting.

<sup>31</sup> 2010 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Survey, Questions 14 and 20.

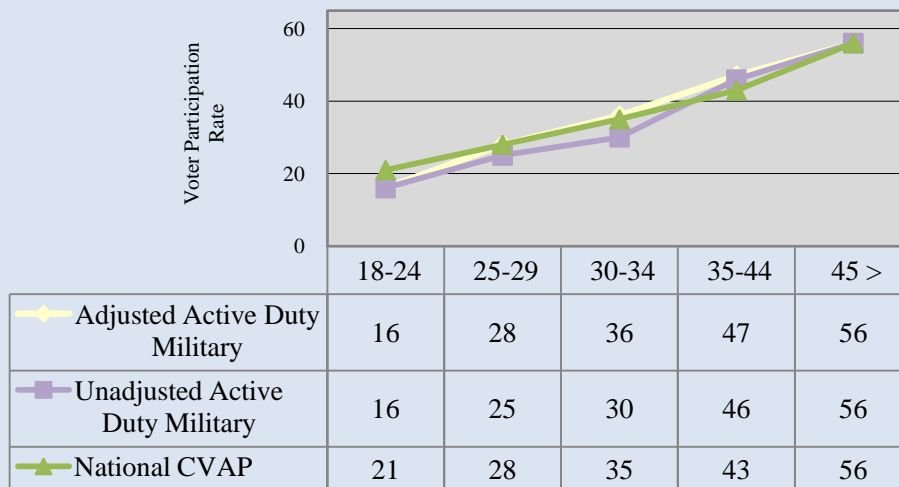
<sup>32</sup> 2006 data are from the 2006 Survey Results on Voting Assistance Among Military Members and DoD Civilian Employees; DMDC Survey Note No. 2007-010, Table 1; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 20. Totals do not add because of rounding errors in individual sub elements.

<sup>33</sup> 2010 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Survey, Question 20.

**Figure 6: 2006 through 2010 Participation Rates for unadjusted ADM, adjusted for age and sex ADM, and national CVAP**



**Figure 7: 2010 Participation rates for unadjusted ADM, adjusted for age and sex ADM, and national CVAP, by Age**

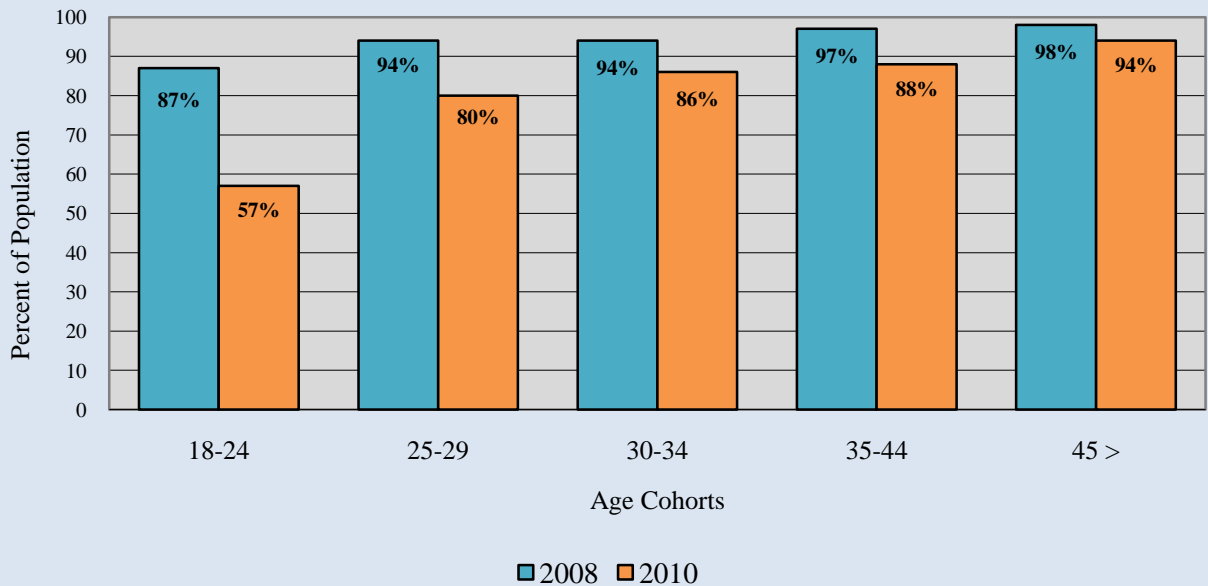


As figure 8<sup>34</sup> illustrates, for those active duty military who received their regular absentee ballot, the rates of return by age have remained stable across the 2008 and 2010 elections, except within the 18-24 age group in 2010.

<sup>34</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 28; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 29.

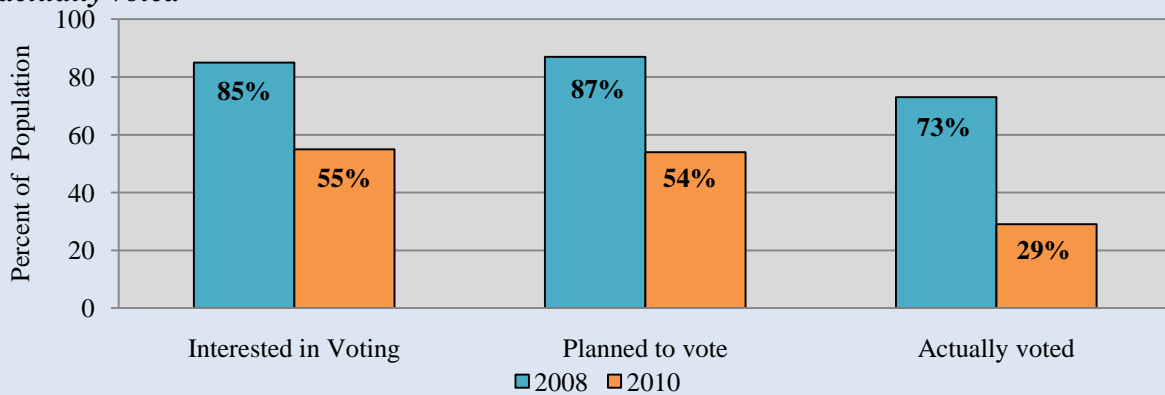


**Figure 8: 2008 and 2010 ADM absentee ballot return rates, by Age**



FVAP wants to examine the hypothesis that because of the nature of voluntary military service, the desire to vote amongst military personnel is greater than that of the comparable CVAP age cohorts. That is why FVAP also surveys voter interest and intent, and compares this to actual voting behavior and success. Below Figure 9, gives a breakdown of those that planned to vote versus how many actually voted.

**Figure 9: 2008 and 2010 ADM interest in voting, planned to vote, and actually voted**

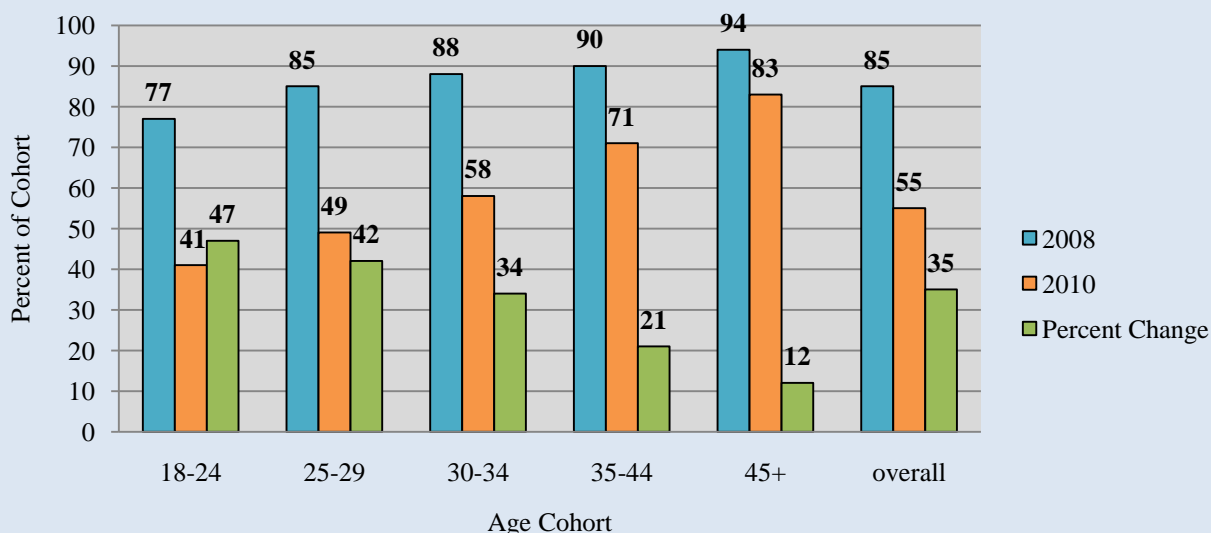


In both the 2008 and 2010 post-election surveys, FVAP attempted to gauge voter interest in the election by asking military personnel, “How interested or uninterested were you in the U.S. elections held on [Election Day date]?” As Figure 10<sup>35</sup> illustrates, there is an expected drop in voter interest between the 2008 and 2010 election. But, that drop is overwhelmingly

<sup>35</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 16; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 16.

concentrated in the 18-29 year old range. For example, in 2008, the 18-24 year old interest level was only 9.4% lower than the overall active duty military voter interest., however, in 2010, it was 25.5% lower.

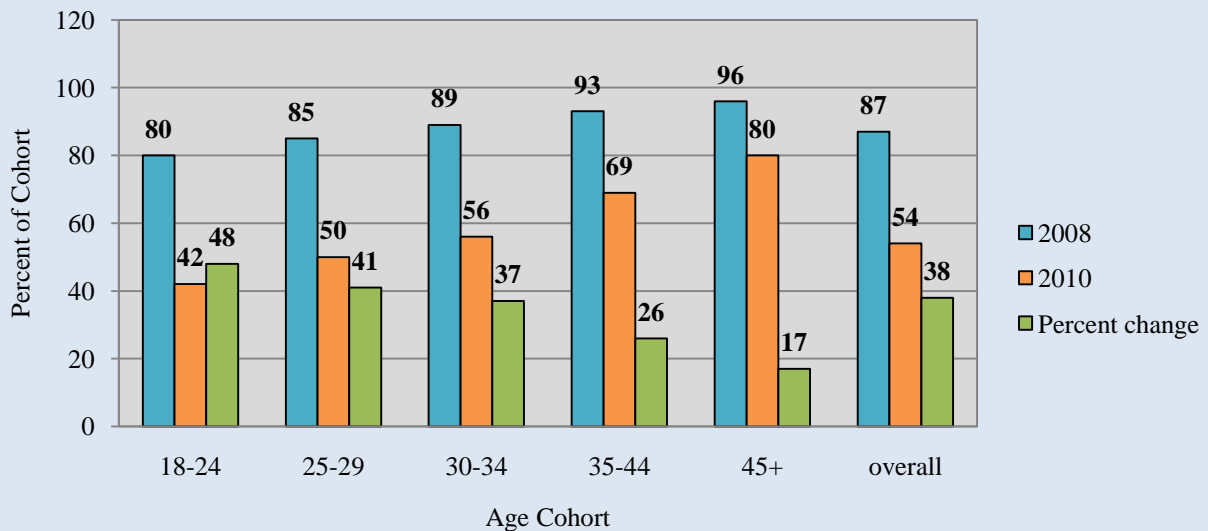
**Figure 10: 2008, 2010, and percent change in ADM interest in election, by Age**



Such disparities play out in other measures of voting success. Figure 11<sup>36</sup> details the answers to the survey question: “During the months leading up to the election held on [date], did you ever plan to vote in that election, or didn't you plan to vote?” Again, while the survey responses indicated an expected drop in voting intentions, the drop was most profound for the 18-29 year old age range. Continuing with the 18-24 year old focus, in 2008, that servicemember’s voting intention was only 8% lower than the overall active duty military voter interest, however, in 2010, it was 22% lower.

<sup>36</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 18; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 19.

**Figure 11: 2008, 2010, and percent change in ADM who planned to vote in the election, by Age**



As discussed, while it is typical for numbers to drop from a Presidential election cycle to the off cycle, it would appear intuitively logical that the ratio of interest to voting “follow-through” should remain relatively the same across elections, regardless of the race at the top of the ballot; however, even these dropped off between the 2008 and 2010 election.

Comparison of the 2008 post-election survey data to that of the 2010 election shows that the proportion of voters who actually followed through on their interest or plans to vote were substantially less in 2010 than in 2008. One possible explanation is that voter intentions are “softer” in non-Presidential election years than in Presidential election years.

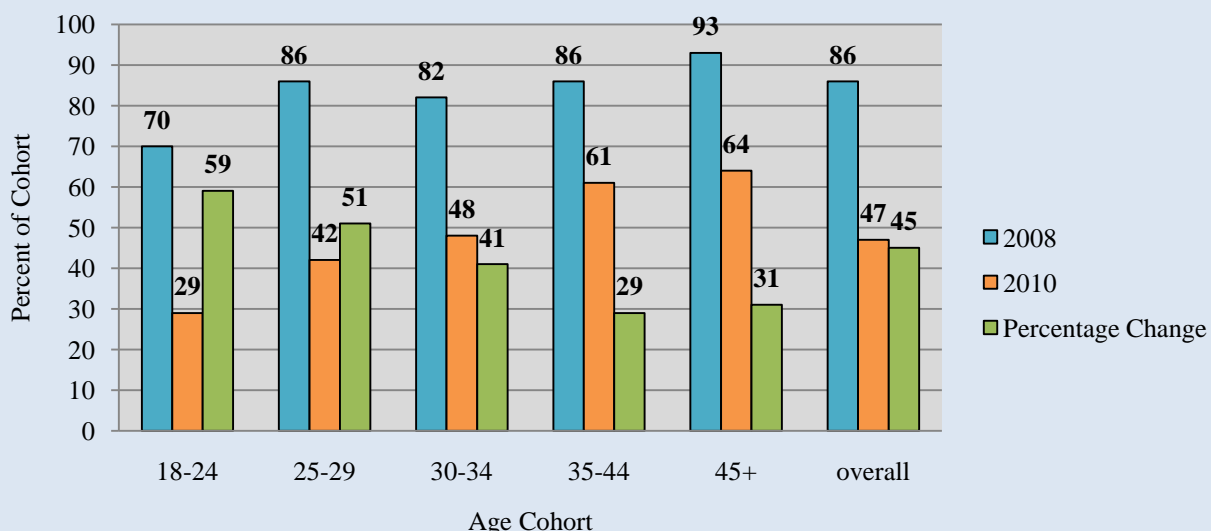
This is borne out in a more detailed analysis of the voter interest questions; both the 2008 and 2010 survey asked whether the voter was Very Interested, Somewhat Interested, Neither Interested or Disinterested, Somewhat Disinterested, or Very Disinterested in the election. For purposes of the analyses in Figures 9 and 10, only those answering Very Interested or Somewhat Interested were counted as “interested.” While the overall active duty military Somewhat Interested response remained relatively stable at 27% (compared to 21% in 2008), the Very Interested response fell from 64% in 2008 to 28% in 2010.

An alternative hypothesis is that voter assistance programs were less effective in 2010 than in 2008. The problem with that conclusion is that while voter election interest and intent fell off more significantly between 2008 and 2010 for younger voters than for older, the drop in the proportion of voters who carried through on those intentions was not uniform in one age direction or another; both younger and older age cohorts showed greater than average reductions in voters carrying through on intentions. Further, as discussed earlier, the voter registration rate amongst the same survey respondents remained the same between 2008 and 2010, while national CVAP voter registration rates dropped significantly. If ineffective voting assistance were the

predominant cause, we would expect to see greater failure to follow through amongst younger voters (as we have with other areas of voting success), as those younger voters have less voting experience and access to fewer voting assistance resources. We would also expect to see a proportional drop in voter registration rates.

Figures 12<sup>37</sup> and 13<sup>38</sup> provide a visual reference for these anomalies in voter interest, voting plans, and actual voting behavior. Of particular note, mere voter interest in the election does raise the unadjusted voter participation rate for every age cohort over that of the CVAP cohort-specific voter participation rates. Similarly, and with an even larger impact, if an active duty military voter planned to vote, their actual unadjusted voter participation rate is higher still, often by at least 10% over those who were simply interested and by 20% over the national CVAP voter participation rates. FVAP is currently exploring comparable voter interest and intent measures for the general electorate to see if more precise comparisons with the CVAP can be drawn.

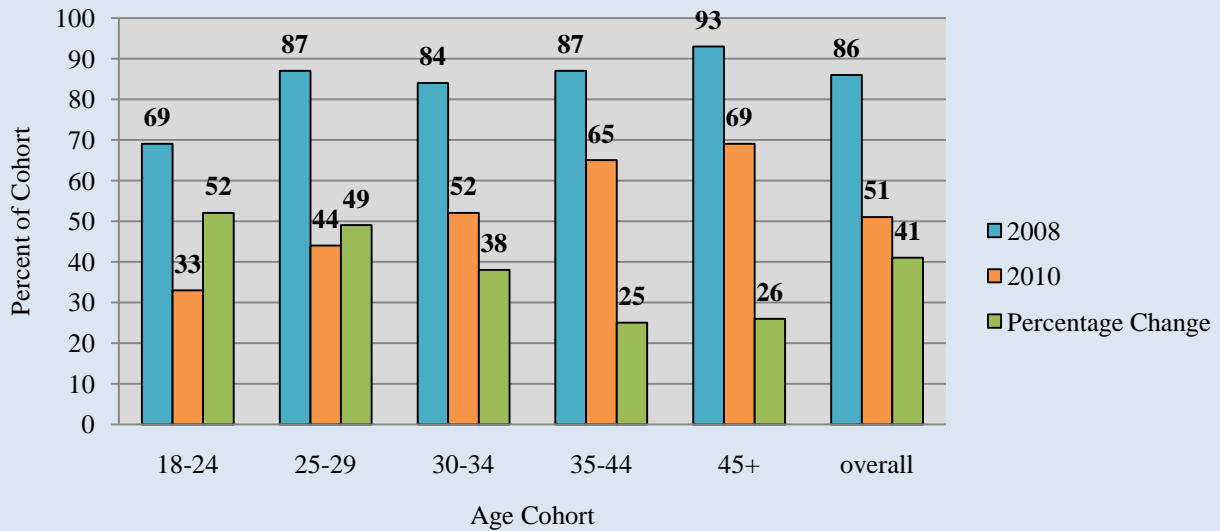
**Figure 12: 2008, 2010 and percent change of ADM who said they were interested in voting and who actually voted, by Age**



<sup>37</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 19 divided by question 16; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 20 divided by question 16.

<sup>38</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 19 divided by question 18; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 20 divided by question 19.

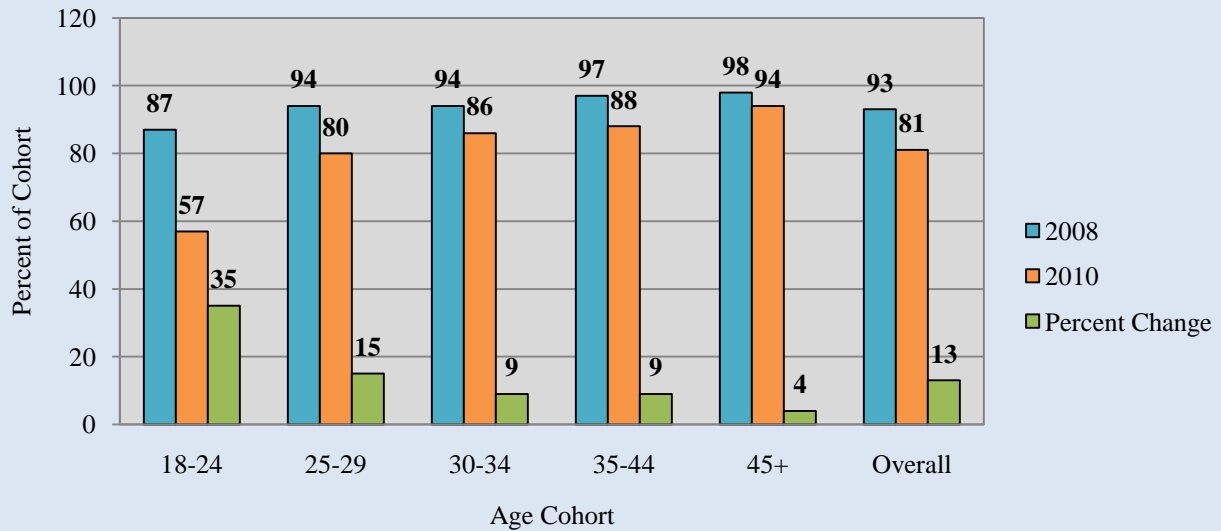
**Figure 13: 2008, 2010 and percent change of ADM who said they planned to vote and who actually voted, by Age**



FVAP also asked active duty military voters if they completed and returned their ballots, as a cross reference to the LEO survey questions. Figure 14<sup>39</sup> shows that younger voters had a markedly lower tendency to complete and return their ballots. In fact, while active duty military voters 30 years and older had less than a 10% drop in their absentee ballot return rates between 2008 and 2010, 18-24 year old voters had a 35% drop in their absentee ballot return rate, and 25-29 year old voters a 15% drop. This is greater drop in relative voting success for younger voters compared to the older cohorts than would be indicated by relative voter interest and intent to vote. Whether this is due to some unique aspect of younger cohorts' voter intentions or desire to vote, or because they suffer from some particular lack of voting assistance or other resources, will require more in-depth analysis of the Active Duty Military survey and possibly follow-up surveys and focus groups.

<sup>39</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 28; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 29.

**Figure 14: 2008, 2010 and percent change of ADM who completed and returned their absentee ballots, by Age**



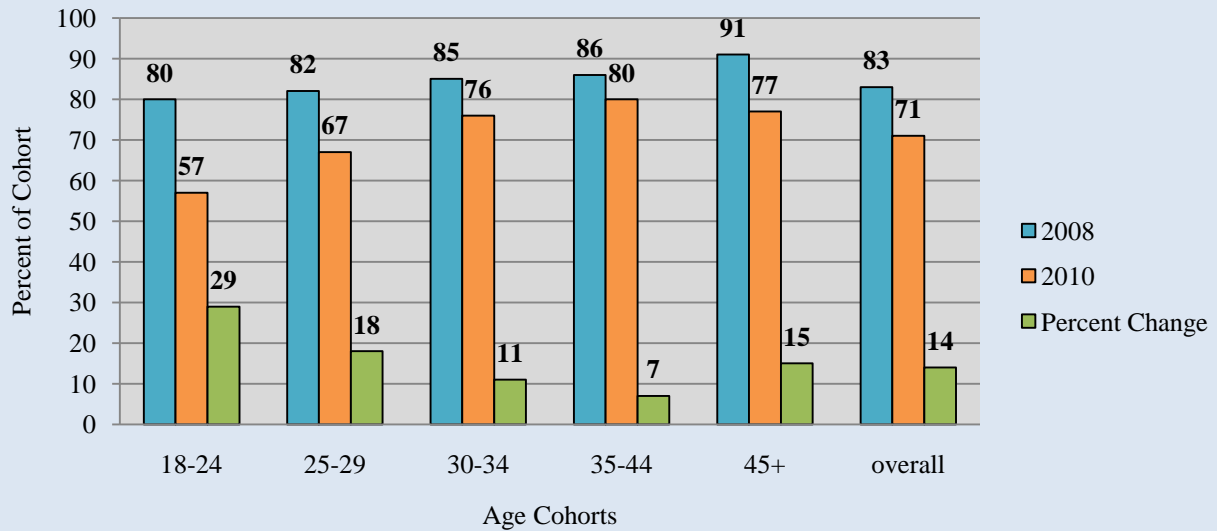
#### ***II.a.iv. Absentee Ballot Receipt and Mail Delivery***

Another explanation may be that the 18-29 year old voters are less likely to receive their ballots in the first place. The very nature of military service places younger personnel in more remote deployed locations, given the younger demographics of combat and other operational units. Assuming that, younger voters may also suffer from longer and more persistent mail delays, as well as experience more frequent unit postal mail address changes. Figure 15<sup>40</sup> compares the absentee ballot receipt rate between 2008 and 2010, amongst those voters who answered the survey as having requested an absentee ballot. Of particular concern is that the proportion of the active duty military who indicated they never received their ballot increased from 17% in 2008 to 29% in 2010. That equates to more than 112,000 active duty military ballots requested but never received.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> 2008 data are from the 2008 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 26; 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 26.

<sup>41</sup> 2010 Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military, question 26.

**Figure 15: 2008, 2010, and percent change of ADM who received their absentee ballots, by Age**



This appears to be supported by the Military Postal Service delivery data from the 2008 and 2010 elections. During the 2008 election, 17,457 of the 191,293 absentee ballots (9.1%) sent through the Military Postal Service (MPS) to overseas military voters were incorrectly addressed.<sup>42</sup> Of that 9%, two-thirds, or 10,621 were readdressed and delivered by MPSA, leaving 3.6% (or 6,836 ballots) undeliverable as addressed. This was supported by the FVAP's 2008 Post-Election LEO Survey which reported 5% of *UOCAVA* ballots transmitted were returned as undeliverable.

However, during the 2010 general election cycle, 33,130 of the 68,977 absentee ballots (48%) sent through MPSA were incorrectly addressed.<sup>43</sup> Of that 48%, 20,065 were readdressed and delivered by MPSA, leaving 19%, or 13,065 undeliverable as addressed. For cross reference, LEOs reported in the 2010 Post-Election Survey that 12% of military ballots were returned as undeliverable as addressed, or an estimated 69,000 ballots.<sup>44</sup> Given MPSA only delivers mail for overseas military personnel and that only about 25% of military personnel are overseas at any one time, the undeliverable as addressed rate for active duty military absentee ballots delivered to locations within the United States should be about nine to ten percent.

Between those two elections, there were at least 23,000 fewer Guardsmen and Reservists on active duty;<sup>45</sup> when Guardsmen and Reservists leave active duty and return to inactive duty, they are no longer eligible for the absentee voting protections of *UOCAVA*, but their Federal Post

<sup>42</sup> 2008 Overseas Postal Voting Data (MPSA)

<sup>43</sup> 2010 Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA). 2010 Analysis of the Military Postal System Compliance with the *Move Act*

<sup>44</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of LEOs q25c/q22c)

<sup>45</sup> As of November 2, 2010, there were 97,002 Reservists and Guardsmen on federal active duty (Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release No. 1013-10). As of November 4, 2008, there were 120,310 Reservists and Guardsmen on federal active duty (Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release No. 933-08).

Card Applications may still linger in States' voter registration databases, driving election officials to continue to send these personnel absentee ballots. For example, Texas military voters make up approximately 15% of the nationwide military total, but during the 2010 election, 26% of the undeliverable ballots were from Texas election jurisdictions.<sup>46</sup> In late 2009, Texas also had the largest single National Guard mobilization with more than 3,500 members of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Division deploying to Iraq.

While there has been a net reduction of only about 11,000 U.S. military personnel overseas between 2008 and 2010, there have been substantial movements to and from both Iraq and Afghanistan, with almost 95,000 fewer service members in Iraq, but about 73,000 more service members in Afghanistan. Given that deployed Army and Air Force units are assigned new Army Post Office (APO) addresses both on deploying to and redeploying from overseas, such force reductions may exacerbate the misaddressed ballot issue experienced in the 2010 election. Combining that with more in-depth analysis of the active duty military survey micro-data may provide sufficient insights to determine the location and cause of these misaddressed and undeliverable ballots and help determine if this is a localized issue, a Service-specific issue, or something more generally applicable to military voters.

## **II.b. Statistical Analysis of Spouses of Active Duty Military**

There are approximately 1.1 million dependents of military personnel and the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* treats the same as active duty military members in voting. However, the *Military Spouse Residency Relief Act* has different voting residency rules than for military members under the *Servicemen's Civil Relief Act*. Because of these differences, spouses of active duty military may not be able to use the protections offered by *UOCAVA* and therefore may be less successful in voting absentee. Previously this was an unstudied population for FVAP; however, in 2010 FVAP surveyed active duty military spouses.

### **II.b.i. Spouses of Active Duty Military Voter Profiles and Voting Patterns<sup>47</sup>**

Like their military spouses, this population needs to be adjusted in order to be comparable with the citizen voting age population (CVAP). The spouses of active duty military are younger and are a larger percentage of females than the CVAP population.

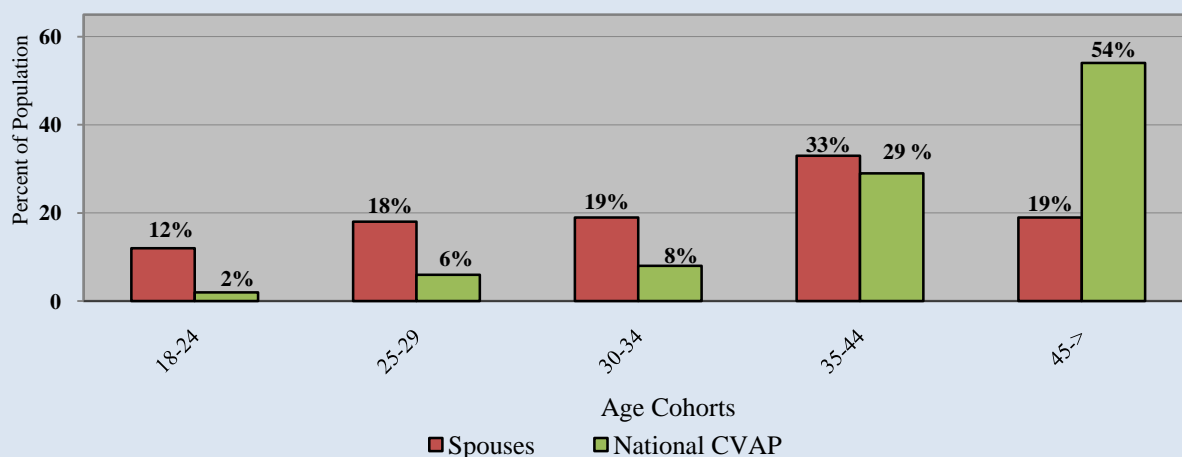
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<sup>46</sup> Military Postal Service Agency. The 2010 Analysis of the Military Postal System Compliance with the MOVE Act. Available at [http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/2010\\_MPSPA\\_after\\_action\\_report.pdf](http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/2010_MPSPA_after_action_report.pdf).

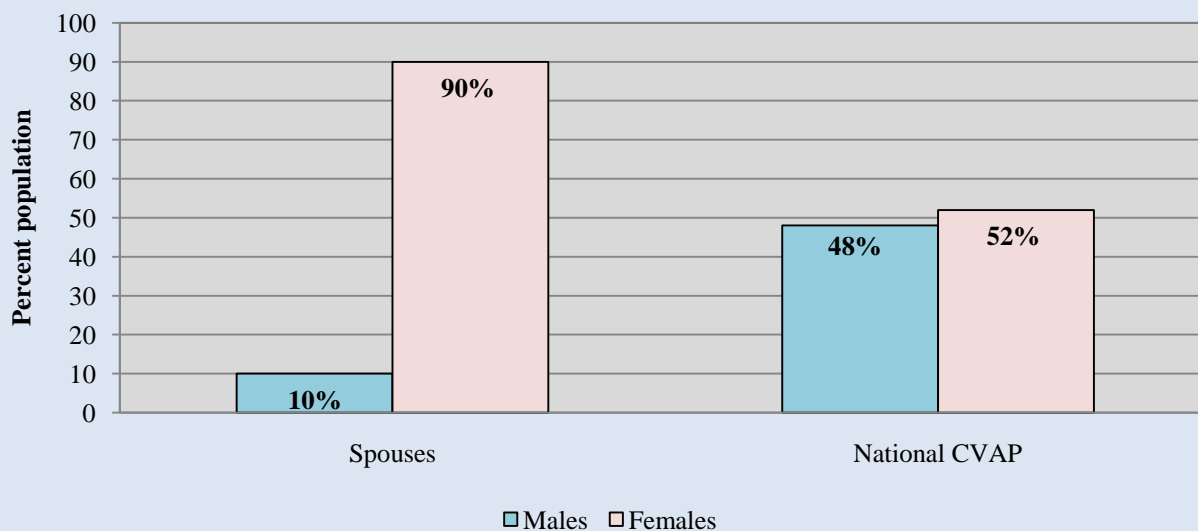
<sup>47</sup> Information presented in this section is taken from the 2010 FVAP survey spouses of active duty military. Information on the general population is pulled from Census Bureau 2010 Current Population Survey, [dataferrett.census.gov](http://dataferrett.census.gov).



**Figure 16: 2010 Age comparisons of the Spouses of Active Duty Military (ADM) to Married National Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP)**



**Figure 17: 2010 Sex Comparison between Spouses of ADM and Married National CVAP**

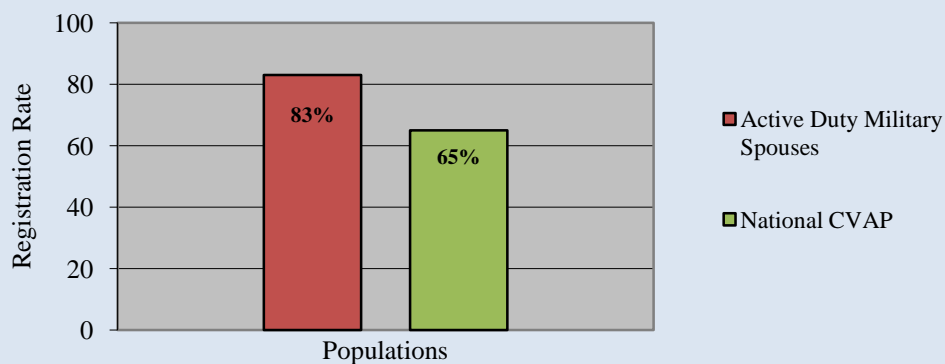


Because this is the first analysis of its kind for FVAP, trend analysis with previous FVAP surveys cannot be made. FVAP will continue to study this important population and will begin trend analysis when possible. However, given that methodological uniformity, it is notable that while the CVAP voter registration rate in 2010 was 65%,<sup>48</sup> the active duty military spouse voter registration rate was at 83%.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, November 2010, [dataferrett.census.gov](http://dataferrett.census.gov). [www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/ondex.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/ondex.html), historical CPS time series table A-1.

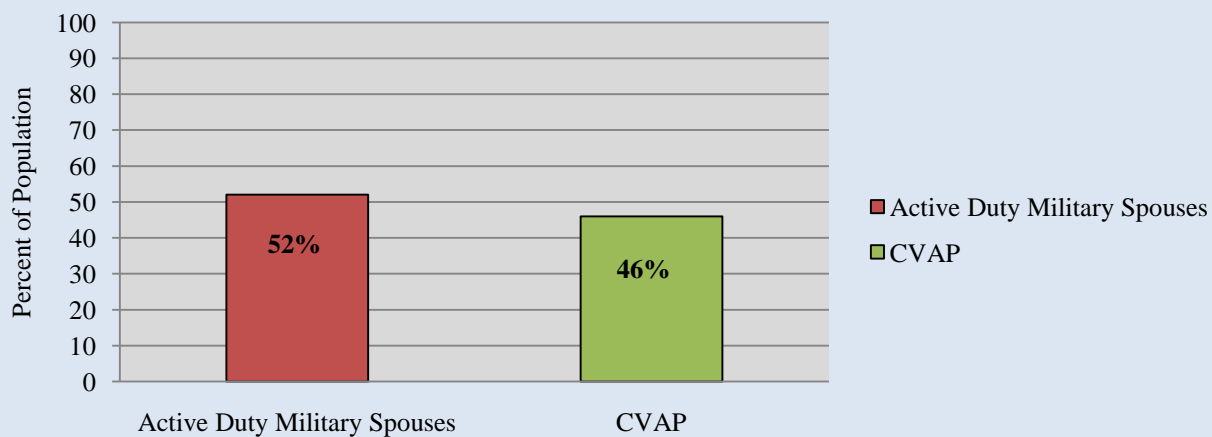
<sup>49</sup> 2010 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Active Duty Military Spouses, question 12.

**Figure 18: 2010 Adjusted Registration rates for Spouses of ADM and national CVAP**



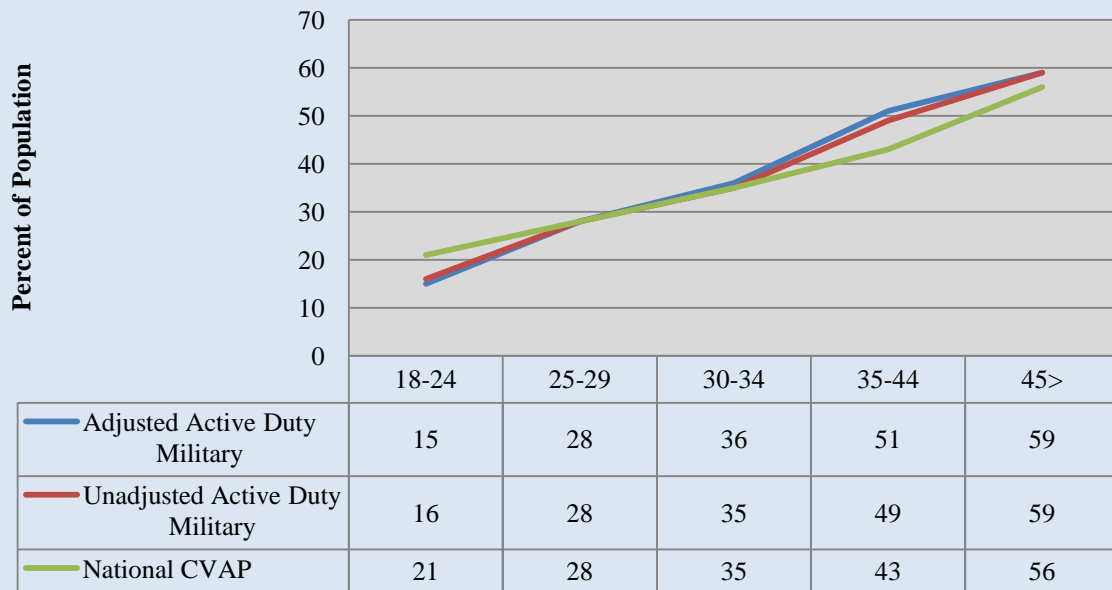
Furthermore, when adjusted for age and sex, 52% of active duty military spouses voted in the 2010 election.<sup>50</sup>

**Figure 19: 2010 Adjusted Participation rates for Spouses of ADM and national CVAP**



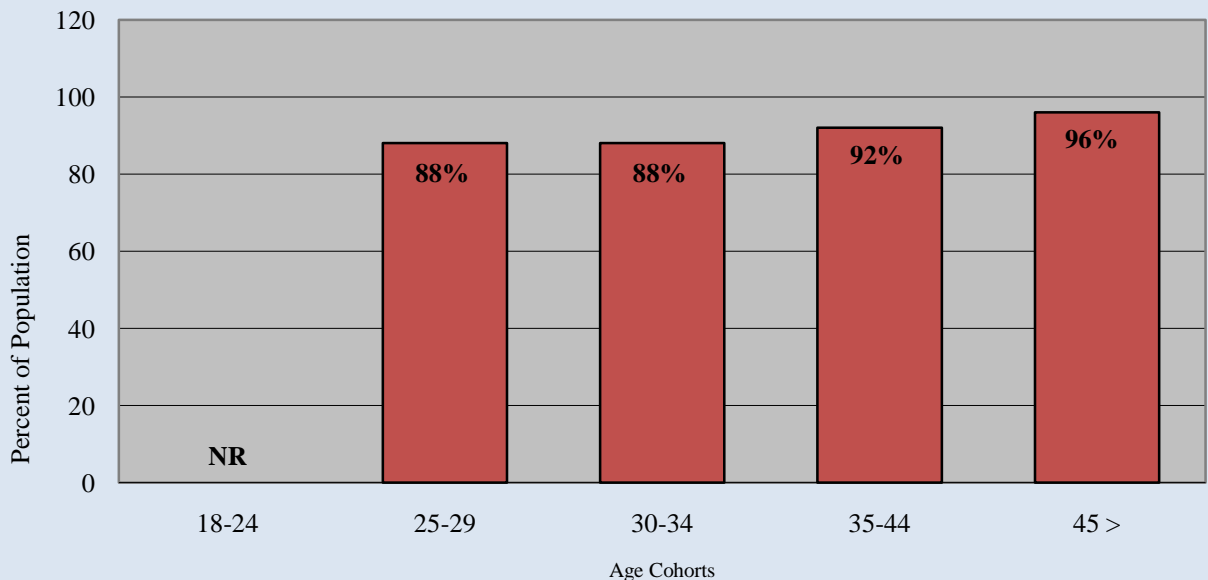
<sup>50</sup> 2010 FVAP Post-Election Survey of Spouses of Active Duty Survey, Questions 11 and 17.

**Figure 20: 2010 Participation Rates for Spouses of Active Duty Military and National CVAP**



As figure 21<sup>51</sup> illustrates, for those spouses of active duty military who received their regular absentee ballot, the rates of return by age range are gradually increasing (18-24 category was not statistically reportable because of a lack of respondents).

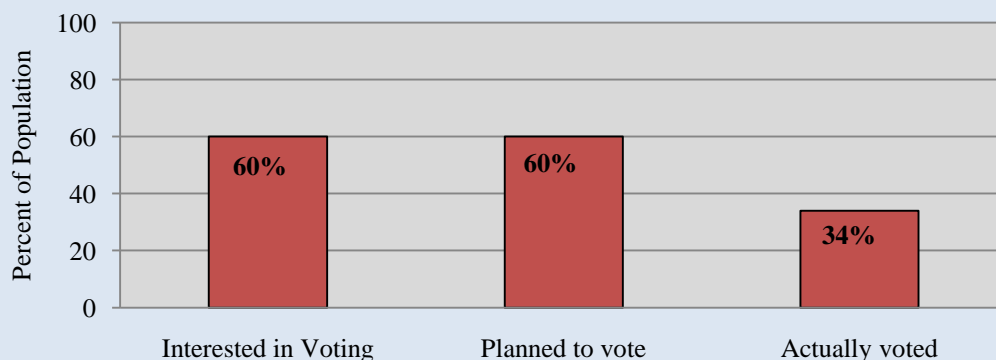
**Figure 21: 2010 Spouses of ADM absentee ballot return rates, by Age**



<sup>51</sup> 2010 data are from the 2010 Post-Election Survey of Spouses of Active Duty Military, question 26.

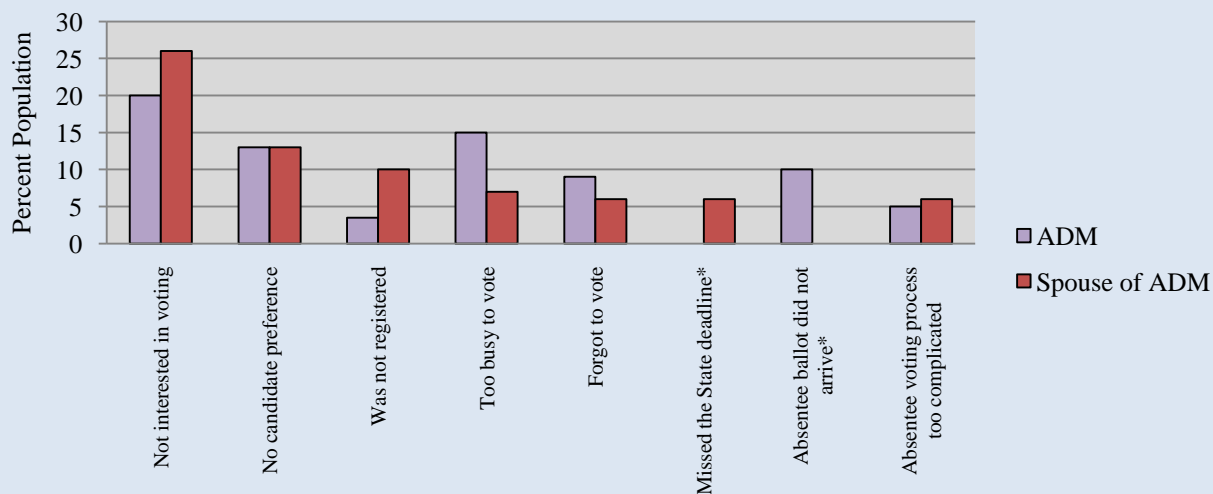
Like the active duty military voter surveys, FVAP also surveyed spouses on their election interest and voting plans, and compared that to actual voting behavior. Figure 22 shows the drop from interest and planned to those who voted. Such disparities play out in other measures of voting success.

**Figure 22: Spouses of ADM Interest in election, planned to vote, and voted**



The data from the survey of spouses of active duty military shows there were a number of reasons why spouses of military did not vote (Figure 23). FVAP will study those problems and further address them in more studies.

**Figure 23: 2010 Reasons ADM and Spouses of ADM definitely did not vote**



\*Note: the spouse survey did not ask if voters did not vote because their ballot did not arrive; the ADM survey did not ask if voters did not vote because they missed the deadline.

## **II.c. Statistical Analysis of Overseas Citizens Interest and Participation**

Overseas civilian voting cannot be analyzed without a clear understanding of that population's size and demographic composition. Presently, it is not known how many U.S. citizens reside overseas. Historically, estimates have ranged from 1.5 million to 6.2 million overseas Americans not serving in the military or dependents of military personnel. The percentage of those overseas U.S. citizens who are of voting age is similarly unknown. Without a clearly understood overseas civilian population, it is not possible to conduct a statistical analysis of the overseas civilian voting population. That is why FVAP must repeat the explanation provided in the post-2008 election report why such survey data is not usable for providing statistical analysis of this subpopulation's voting behavior.

In 2010 FVAP began researching how to demographically quantify this population because of the problems surveying and defining overseas U.S. citizens. In 2011, FVAP, in coordination with the Armed Forces Services Corporation (AFSC), Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF), and Lexis Nexis, initiated a multi-stream data collection effort on locations and numbers of overseas citizens. The project, the Overseas Citizens Count (OCC), is designed to determine population clusters of US citizens living abroad, and examine the distribution of US citizens within countries.

Initial analysis is being finalized now; however more can and will be done. For example, further analysis of city-level data may be done to better understand the distribution of US citizens across urban and rural areas within countries. FVAP and partners are continuing the research on this project and are planning to release a report later this year.

However, to meet FVAP's legislative reporting requirements of a statistical analysis of overseas U.S. citizen voters, FVAP will repeat its 2008 practice of inferring such data from the Local Election Officials survey.

Based on the 2010 Post Election Survey of Local Election Officials, there were 552,861 registered and eligible overseas civilian U.S. citizens. Further, 45% of those registered, or 248,611, of those overseas civilian U.S. citizens participated in the November 2010 election. 222,189 absentee ballots were transmitted to overseas civilian U.S. citizens, including 33,611 (15%) transmitted after the State ballot transmission deadline.

89,181 FPCAs were reported received by LEOs from overseas civilians. Of those FPCAs received from overseas civilian U.S. citizens, 5% (4,087) were unsuccessfully processed.

The top three reasons why FPCAs were unsuccessfully processed for Overseas Civilians were as follows:

- Duplicate FPCAs received from an applicant;
- Applicant failed to provide an adequate voting residence address; and
- FPCA received after the statutory deadline.

## II.d. Local Election Officials

Local Election Officials (LEO) process voter registration and absentee ballot applications, send absentee ballots to voters, and receive and process the voted ballots in counties, cities, parishes, townships and other jurisdictions within the U.S.

LEOs are often one of the most important pieces in the absentee voting process for *UOCAVA* citizens. However, LEOs and State Election Officials must work according to absentee balloting requirements and State legislatively mandated deadlines that may prevent *UOCAVA* voters from having a reasonable chance of exercising their right to vote. These requirements vary from one State to another, resulting in a FVAP-produced 296 page *Voting Assistance Guide*. *UOCAVA* voters must learn new requirements each time they move or want to vote absentee. In 2008 a delegation of five Secretaries of State and State Election Directors visiting military forces in Iraq mirrored the above assessment, stating, “Differing rules required by each State also complicate the voting process. For example, whether there is a requirement to have a ballot notarized or supported by an affidavit, or even when the ballot is mailed to voters depends on each state’s requirements.”<sup>52</sup>

**Table 3**  
*LEO Numbers from 2010 Survey*

	Overall <i>UOCAVA</i>	Military	Overseas Citizens
Registered and Eligible	1,468,641	915,779	552,861
FPCAs received from voters	256,755	167,574	89,181
FPCAs unsuccessfully processed	18,280	14,193	4,087
FPCAs unsuccessfully processed because they were a duplicate	10,268	8,062	2,206
FPCAs unsuccessfully processed because they were mailed to the wrong jurisdiction	1,768	1,623	NA
FPCAs unsuccessfully processed because applicant failed to provide adequate voting residence	1,514	1,121	393

<sup>52</sup> “Military and Overseas Challenges: A Report from the Front.” (Fall 2008) Report compiled and published by Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann. [Delbert.hosemann@sos.ms.gov](mailto:Delbert.hosemann@sos.ms.gov)

	Overall <i>UOCAVA</i>	Military	Overseas Citizens
<i>UOCAVA</i> Ballots transmitted to voters	573,201	351,012	222,189
<i>UOCAVA</i> ballots returned as undeliverable	49,992	42,941	7,051
<i>UOCAVA</i> ballots transmitted and returned by voters	193,661	118,135	75,527
<i>UOCAVA</i> ballots transmitted and returned by voters but not counted	10,176	7,226	2,910
<i>UOCAVA</i> ballots transmitted and returned by voters but rejected because received after deadline	3,600	2,149	1,452
<i>UOCAVA</i> Absentee Ballots Counted	184,242	112,785	71,457
FWABs returned by <i>UOCAVA</i> voters	6,784	4,428	2,356
FWABs returned by <i>UOCAVA</i> voters but NOT counted	2,602	1,900	702
FWABs returned by <i>UOCAVA</i> voters and counted	4,383	2,593	1,791

**These are numbers that should not be used in calculating ratios and inferences should not be drawn based on the margins of errors**

Many *UOCAVA* voters do not know the status of their registration, absentee ballot request, blank ballot transmission, or returned voted ballot. In 2008 the number one complaint Voting Assistance Officers heard from voters was that the voters did not receive confirmation from their LEO that their registration had been received and processed.<sup>53</sup> Without such knowledge, voters cannot determine if they must take remedial action on their applications, or whether they are even eligible to use the back-up Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB),

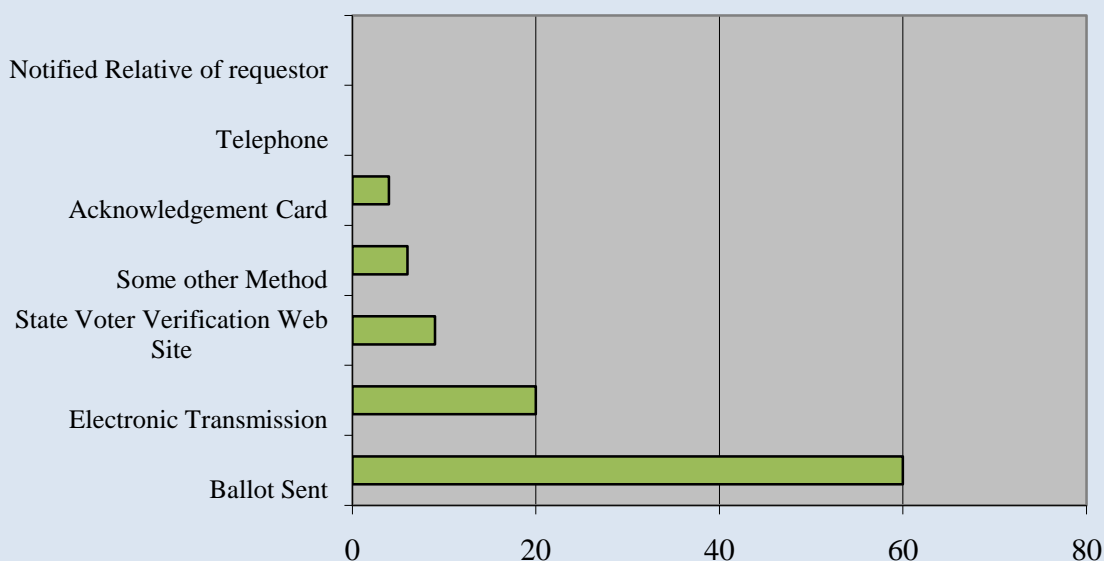
<sup>53</sup> 2008 Survey of Voting Assistance Officers, question 21

which still requires, under *UOCAVA* and in most States, that the voter be registered and have requested an absentee ballot in a timely manner. Because 93% of LEOs acknowledged ballot requests made by *UOCAVA* voters using the Federal Post Card Application,<sup>54</sup> it is important for voters to pay attention to their mail and information on the acknowledgments.

As discussed above, in the fall of 2008, the DoD hosted five Secretaries of State<sup>55</sup> to travel to seven United States Military bases in Asia, Europe and the Middle East to meet with deployed troops and uniformed service voting representatives. The Secretaries heard from *UOCAVA* voters that they “would like to be able to check their voter registration status online, have access to more information about candidates and their campaigns, and most critically, know their ballot was received and counted.”<sup>56</sup>

LEOs use a variety of methods to notify voters of their status, and sometimes multiple methods. Thirty seven States (up 3 from 34 in 2009) report having a state voter verification website where voters can check the status of their registration, and where they can update the status of the voter’s registration application.

**Figure 24: 2010 Initial Methods used by LEOs to acknowledge ballot request status**



Note: Percent responding are Local Election Officials who answered the question (Q6), who received the FPCA (Q5), and who acknowledged ballot requests by FPCAs (+/-2)

Although LEOs are required under *UOCAVA* to notify voters if registration is rejected,<sup>57</sup> they are not required to notify voters if their registration and absentee ballot application have

<sup>54</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of LEOs, question 13

<sup>55</sup> California Secretary of State Debra Bowen, Florida Secretary of State Kurt Browning, Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita, Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann, Pennsylvania Secretary of the Commonwealth Pedro Cortes, and Mississippi Deputy Secretary of State Cory Wilson participated.

<sup>56</sup> Secretary of State Report on Military and Overseas Challenges: A report from the front (2008)

<sup>57</sup> *UOCAVA* Sec 102 State Responsibilities (42 USC 1973ff-1(d))



been accepted. Given that, as Figure 24 details, for 60% of LEOs, the very first notification they give the voter their registration or absentee ballot application has been accepted is to send the voter the ballot.

Further, lack of LEO access to State voter registration verification websites is problematic in that they cannot update addresses without the voter's input. If LEOs do not have correct ballot delivery addresses for *UOCAVA* voters, the ballot is very unlikely to be delivered, let alone in time for it to be voted and returned by the absentee ballot deadline. Registration and ballot request are a significant concern given that the 2010 FVAP Post Election Survey of active duty military spouses found that 19% did not receive their regular absentee ballot and 29% of active duty military report not receive their absentee ballot.<sup>58</sup> While FVAP strongly recommends voters check their registration and absentee ballot application status on State websites and consistently update their local election officials of change of address, such efforts are of limited value if the LEO does not have access to these verification tools.

Uniformed service voters are a very mobile population; the average tour of duty in any one command is only two to three years, often times interrupted by individual or unit deployments overseas (with new mailing addresses), and frequent periods of temporary training duty within the United States. With 1.45 million active duty military personnel, approximately 500,000 to 700,000 military personnel transfers can be expected every year, in addition to any periods of temporary duty and overseas assignments which may result in a change of absentee ballot delivery address.

Any registration and absentee ballot application system is going to experience some level of failure, but in 2008 the FPCA was shown to be rejected at higher rates than registrations and absentee ballot applications of the national CVAP.

The 2010 FVAP *Post Election Survey* shows of the 256,755 FPCAs submitted for registration or ballot request, 7% were rejected. The top three reasons why FPCAs were unsuccessfully processed for all *UOCAVA* voters:<sup>59</sup>

- duplicate FPCAs received from an applicant;
- FPCA mailed to wrong election jurisdiction; and
- Applicant failed to provide an adequate voting residence address.

A greater chance of failure also awaits *UOCAVA* voters at the next stage of the absentee voting process, the transmission of the blank ballot in time to vote and return it to be successfully cast. Unfortunately, timely transmission of the absentee ballot to *UOCAVA* voters still appears to be a significant problem. The *MOVE Act* amended *UOCAVA* in requiring election officials to mail ballots to *UOCAVA* voters at least 45 days before the election, starting with the 2010 general election. However, 44% of election officials reported first mailing ballots after September 18, 2010 (Figure 25), which is 45 days before the election.

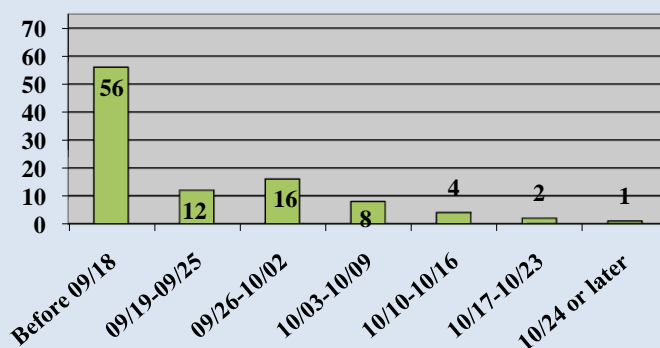
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<sup>58</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of Active Duty Military Spouses, question 20

<sup>59</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of LEOs q11. Question 11 asked respondents of the total number of unsuccessfully processed FPCAs received from *UOCAVA* voters, how many were unsuccessfully processed due to the following reasons.

This is why multiple modes of electronic ballot transmission are so vitally important. *UOCAVA* voters not only need the capability to receive ballots by email (“push” electronic transmission), but also to download a blank ballot from the Web (“pull” electronic transmission).

**Figure 25: Date when LEOs first began mailing balloting materials to uniformed service members and overseas citizens**



Note: Percent responding are LEOs who answered the question and who mailed regular absentee ballots (Q21)

In 2010, of the 573,201 ballots transmitted to *UOCAVA* voters, 2% were rejected (10,176). Overall for *UOCAVA* voters, the top three reasons why mailed regular absentee ballots were rejected for all *UOCAVA* voters:<sup>60</sup>

- received after statutory deadline;
- did not have a voter signature and/or signature date; and
- did not have a witness signature and/or signature date.

Of those 2%, 35% or 3,600 ballots were rejected because they were received after the State deadline. In 2010 FVAP specifically asked LEO voters about ballots rejected because they were received after the deadline. Of the 573,201 absentee ballots transmitted to *UOCAVA* voters, 35% (roughly 3,600 ballots) were rejected because they were received after the State deadline.<sup>61</sup> FVAP will continue to study these questions into the future.

### III. Effectiveness of Assistance and the Federal Voting Assistance Program

Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to mediate the process and assist all those involved in the process. FVAP offers many services to each part of the *UOCAVA* population: uniformed service members, overseas civilians (both Federal employees and non-Federal employees), Voting Assistance Officers and Local Election Officials. This report section is required in part to evaluate these resources and the effectiveness of the program.

<sup>60</sup> 2010 LEO Survey, question 34. Question 34 asked respondents of the total number of mailed regular absentee ballots returned by *UOCAVA* voters, how many were rejected due to the following reasons.

<sup>61</sup> 2010 LEO Survey, question Q31/Q30. Question 30 asked participants for the total number of regular absentee ballots returned by *UOCAVA* voters that were rejected. Question 31 asked participants for the total number of regular absentee ballots returned by *UOCAVA* voters that were rejected because they were received after the statutory deadline.

FVAP offers many services like a very in depth website or portal of services and information, training for voters, voting assistance officers, and election officials, partnerships, communications tools and networking capabilities. As required by the *UOCAVA*, FVAP surveyed its stakeholders to analyze the effectiveness of these resources and the program. Overall the resources are well liked and very useful; however, the awareness of these resources is still lacking.

### **III.a. Voting Assistance Officers**

Voting Assistance Officers (VAO) are designated individuals who provide accurate, non-partisan voting information and assistance to *UOCAVA* voters.

Given FVAP's budget investment of an estimated \$461,000 in Voting Assistance Officer training for the 2010 election cycle, and despite the development of new training programs that focus on providing voters with information and resource referral (especially the FVAP.gov website), voter self reported awareness of those resources has not appreciably improved over the past two election cycles. But the use of FVAP products, such as FVAP.gov and balloting automated systems has significantly improved. It is possible, voters do not know the "brand" FVAP, but instead know the resources available to them.

FVAP recognizes that VAOs are an important source of information for *UOCAVA* voters; however, it has been noted by the DoD Inspector General that "voting assistance will always be a secondary duty [for military unit Voting Assistance Officers], senior leadership can expect improvement only if a radically different approach is applied."<sup>62</sup> FVAP believes such radical solutions are available by:

- Developing online ballot transmission and marking systems (but not electronic casting of voted ballots, the method commonly referred to as "internet voting"), using readily available online systems, for States to adopt and voters to use, with FVAP serving as the intermediary between voters and State voting systems through the FVAP.gov portal;
- Providing a more direct-to-the-voter orientation of the voting assistance program, with more online tools, information, and capabilities for the voter which do not require the direct assistance of the Voting Assistance Officer;
- Providing more voter and election official assistance in the months leading up to elections through call centers, online chat capability, and greater ombudsman support, to solve problems before they become *UOCAVA* voting failure statistics and potential *UOCAVA* enforcement actions.

With the passage of the *MOVE Act* in 2009, the Services were directed to establish at each military installation a new Installation Voter Assistance Offices. The *MOVE Act* instructs that these offices provide information and direct assistance on voter registration and absentee ballot procedures to Uniformed Services members and their family members whenever a service member:

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<sup>62</sup> DoD IG, 2004 *Evaluation*, p. 17, 26

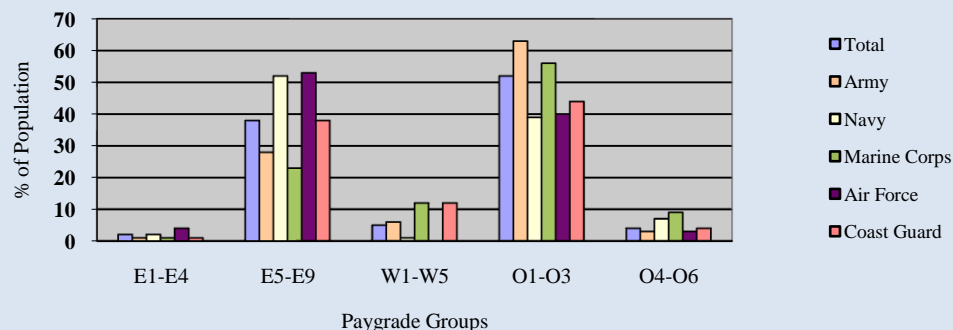
- In/Out-processes a new duty station;
- Change address;
- Deploys overseas for at least six months or returns from such a deployment; and
- Requests such assistance.

### III.a.i. Unit Voting Assistance Officers

DoD Directive 1000.04 states that “Heads of the DoD Components and the Uniformed Services shall designate and assign in writing a Unit Voting Assistance Officer, at the O-2/E-7 level.” However, Departmental policy guidance states that if someone of a lower grade desires the job, then they could be designated as the UVAO if the Commanding Officer believes they are capable, as enthusiasm for the job is strongly correlated with program success.<sup>63</sup>

Data gathered from the 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs shows that 56% of UVAOs are officers and 40% of UVAOs are enlisted members. Figure 26 illustrates a breakdown of UVAOs by rank and service.<sup>64</sup> Most common ranks are E5-E9 and O1-O3. More than half of the Navy and Air Force’s UVAOs were enlisted, while more than two-third of the Army’s and more than 60% of the Marine Corps’ UVAOs were officers.

**Figure 26: 2010 Paygrades of UVAOs**



Despite being responsible for such large populations, voting assistance officers reported only helping, on average, 31 military voters per week and an additional 8 dependents.<sup>65</sup> Thirty-two percent of UVAOs spend 1- 2 hours per week on voting duties, with the average per week being 1 hour. UVAOs spend most of their time handing out forms, directing voters to the FVAP website, and explaining State voting procedures and/or election deadlines to voters

Regardless, assuming 9,907 UVAOs across all the Services, an average one hour per week on voting assistance, 50 working weeks per year and average pay of \$32.59 per hour, then

<sup>63</sup> Guidance in Implementing Voting Assistance Programs, Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, from Dr. Chu (available at [www.fvap.gov/resources/media/chu\\_guidance\\_memo.pdf](http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/chu_guidance_memo.pdf))

<sup>64</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 4

<sup>65</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, questions 17 and 18.

the Services have invested at least \$16.8 million in voting assistance officers for the 2010 election.<sup>66</sup>

Generally UVAOs were satisfied with command support (61% were satisfied or highly satisfied) and supplies available to them. Unfortunately, despite the DoD requirement that all UVAOs must be trained within 90 days of assuming their duties, only 65% of UVAOs received such training.<sup>67</sup> Further, while 33% of UVAOs never received the *Voting Assistance Guide* (up from 23% in 2008), 83% of those who did receive it found it useful or very useful.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, 45% of UVAOs were never registered for the *FVAP News Release* or *Election Alert System*; however, of those who were registered, 90% of them forwarded alerts to their unit members.<sup>69</sup> Finally, 86% of VAOs visited the FVAP website (down from 92% in 2008), and 98% of those who did visit it found it useful.<sup>70</sup>

DoD Directive 1000.04 is currently in DoD-coordination to update it with the requirements of the *MOVE Act* and lessons learned from prior surveys and reports. Many of the issues raised by the 2010 and prior year surveys are being addressed in those revisions, and will hopefully provide the Services with greater guidance on improving the Voting Assistance Officer programs.

Given that being a UVAO is an ancillary duty, it is not surprising that they spend on average only 1 hour per week helping people and that their unit members do not know what resources are available when voting absentee. But the evidence is again mixed on whether that hurt voting opportunity or not for active duty military personnel. For example, in 2010, while the percent of active duty military personnel who received assistance from their UVAOs dropped to 37% from 48% in 2008 (a 23% decrease), the percentage of voters who said they did not know who their UVAO was also dropped 41% in 2008 to 27% in 2010 (a 34% decrease).

Similarly, while the percent of active duty military who visited the FVAP.gov website dropped to 18% in 2010 down from 28% in 2008 (but up from 16% in 2006), the percent who said they did not know about the FVAP.gov website dropped 25% in 2010, down from 48% in 2008 to 36% in 2010. Finally, while Voting Assistance Guide use dropped from 16% in 2008 to 12% in 2010, the percent who said they did not know what the Voting Assistance Guide was dropped from 51% to 29% between 2008 and 2010.

It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions on voting assistance use and access comparing voter behavior in a Presidential election year like 2008 and a non-Presidential election year like 2010. But it is notable that the drop in voter assistance utilization was less than the drop in active duty military voter participation (a 45% drop between 2008 and 2010), voters planning to vote (a 38% drop), and voter interest in the election (a 34% drop). Alternatively put, a greater percentage of voters voted or wanted to vote successfully used voter assistance resources.

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<sup>66</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 21

<sup>67</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 13

<sup>68</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 24 and 25

<sup>69</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 28 and 29

<sup>70</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey UVAOs, question 31 and 34

Finally, even though voter assistance use may have dropped between 2008 and 2010, voter knowledge of voter assistance resources rose appreciably over the same two years, even though 2010 was a non-Presidential election year. Across all three main methods of voting assistance – the FVAP.gov website, the Unit Voting Assistance Officer, and the Voting Assistance Guide, active duty military awareness of these resources rose 23% to 24%. This would appear to indicate Service and unit level voting training, as well as FVAP, Service, and command-level outreach and marketing, are substantially improving voter awareness of voter assistance resources.

While this was the first election in which a survey of military spouses was conducted, military spouse awareness of voting assistance resources appears much lower than their spouses on active duty. For example, only 22% of spouses were aware they could get help from Installation or UVAOs, and only eight percent actually did receive such assistance.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, only 14% of military spouses were aware of the Voting Assistance Guide, and only three percent used it.<sup>72</sup> Only 22% of spouses were aware of the FVAP website<sup>73</sup> Although FVAP also provided voting assistance marketing targeted at military spouse voters, there are no prior surveys against which to compare voter awareness. Further, considering only 40% of military spouse voters vote by absentee ballot<sup>74</sup> (compared to 62% of military voters<sup>75</sup>), these lower awareness rates may simply be indicative of less demand for absentee voting assistance services amongst spouses. Regardless, given the low awareness numbers, FVAP will continue to target military spouses in 2012 outreach and marketing campaigns.

Given this, it does not appear that registration is a significant problem for military voting success. With 85% adjusted active duty military stating they were registered to vote, and 80% active duty military spouses, there is some indication that the Services are effectively registering its members. It is the very low UVAO exposure numbers that are a major concern and are not new, but reflect what the DoD Inspector General has reported in its annual surveys of FVAP's and the Services UVAO programs since 2002. Collateral duties are, by definition, assigned as collateral duties because the expectation is they can be done without disrupting the assigned member's full-time assignment or the service the collateral duty supports.

Therefore, FVAP is exploring ways to fundamentally revise the method for delivering voting assistance, such as:

- Engaging outside contractors to provide professional, full-time, short-period voting assistance throughout the *UOCAVA* populations. FVAP issued a request for proposals for voting assistance officer workshops on August 5, 2011.
- Centralizing voting assistance services and information through FVAP to improve information quality, reduce voter and VAO frustration, and provide real-time online assistance and voting tools for *UOCAVA* voters.

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<sup>71</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey ADM Spouses, question 33

<sup>72</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey ADM Spouses, question 40

<sup>73</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey ADM Spouses, question 36

<sup>74</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey ADM Spouses, question 17

<sup>75</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey ADM, question 20



- Providing more direct to the voter assistance to ensure greater quality control of the information provided the voter and reduce the burden on UVAOs. Also, automating much of the voting assistance process so that the voter can intuitively execute the different stages of the absentee balloting process without having to reference voluminous instructions, such as with online “wizards.”

### **III.a.i.1. Voting Assistance Officer Training**

As the first line of assistance in the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process, VAOs must receive the training and the materials directed to voters. However, only 65% of UVAOs received training and 21% of DoS VAOs received training.<sup>76</sup>

FVAP offers training to both State election officials and all VAOs. In preparation for the Federal election cycle, FVAP conducts workshops around the world at consulates, embassies, and bases to train new and experienced VAOs. In total, FVAP conducted 124 workshops with voting assistance officers and conducted 36 additional workshops specifically for military installations to establish and run effective Installation Voter Assistance Offices. VAOs that attended training find it useful; however, the training rate for VAOs must substantially improve if current requirements of the DoD Directive 1000.04 are to be obtained. For the 2012 election cycle, FVAP has instituted quarterly Service-level reporting requirements to track VAO training accomplishment and Service, installation, and unit-level voting assistance activities.

For the 2009-2010 election cycle, FVAP expanded its workshop schedule, especially for overseas voters. First, it specifically reached out to the overseas civilian voting advocacy organizations to train them on how to effectively serve as the equivalent of VAOs for their non-governmental organizations, and to attend workshops hosted by U.S. embassies and consulates. FVAP supplemented these outreach efforts through social networking sites like MeetUp.com.

Second, to support this expanded civilian outreach, FVAP and the Department of State started moving workshops out of embassies and consulates into the local economy, given the difficulties many overseas voters cite in entering an embassy or consulate. Third, FVAP conducted workshops at joint staffs, such as the Combatant Command headquarters, since the previous reliance on Service identification of workshop locations missed these important staff sites. FVAP also engaged the Combatant Commands to more closely monitor voting assistance programs amongst their assigned units, especially in setting realistic intra-theater mail delivery deadlines to expedite ballot transmission and return. Finally, FVAP conducted 11 workshops for State and local election officials reaching an estimated 2,600 officials, in order to advise them as to the new requirements of the *MOVE Act*, new FVAP initiatives to support their programs, and key issues of compliance with federal law.

In addition to the in-person training, the FVAP.gov website and portal provides a complete Voting Assistance Officer section, which includes online VAO training, complete templates for establishing an effective Voting Assistance Officer program, election alerts, and a wealth of information that will help them fulfill their responsibilities.

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<sup>76</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of DoS VAOs, question 10 and Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 13

Finally, to assist the Services implement the *MOVE Act* requirement of designating offices on each military installation as Voter Assistance Offices and given the logistical hurdles and issues regarding delayed program starts, FVAP provided extensive in-person and webinar training for the new *MOVE Act* requirement for Installation Voter Assistance Officers, conducting onsite training in June and July 2010 at 36 military concentration areas worldwide. This training also provided complete training manuals and administrative document templates, much like an “IVA Office in a Box” turnkey set-up.

### **III.a.ii. Department of State Voting Assistance Officers (DoS VAO)**

The Department of State provides voting assistance and outreach directed to non-military U.S. citizens abroad. Virtually every U.S. embassy and consulate has a VAO. The Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs has a Voting Assistance Office that serves as a resource for DoS VAOs. This office provides guidance, expertise, on-demand training, and responses to inquiries and requests from DoS VAOs and private overseas citizens.

With 238 VAOs Department of State embassies and consulates overseas, and having a voting-specific e-mail address associated with each embassy and consulate VAO, FVAP was able to conduct to conduct a full census.

Embassies and consulates are one of the first portals of information for overseas civilians. Therefore, it is important for DoS VAOs to have the materials and training that they need. However, despite the fact that almost 70% of DoS VAOs were new to the duties in the 2010 election cycle, only 21% of them received training to perform their VAO duties.<sup>77</sup> Note: Department of State officers typically transfer to their onward assignment during the summer months. Many VAOs who may have previously received training may have changed assignments by the time the survey was distributed.

Like UVAOs, voting assistance is a collateral duty for DoS VAOs. On average DoS VAOs provided assistance to 188.7 voters in the primaries and November 2 general election, or about one voter every two days in 2010.<sup>78</sup> Ninety-seven percent of DoS VAOs spend 10 hours or less on voting duties throughout the 2010 election cycle.<sup>79</sup> Fifty-six percent are satisfied with the support they receive from the Embassy and the amount of time they are given to complete voting duties.

DoS VAOs most often provide assistance on the following:<sup>80</sup>

1. Directing voters to the FVAP automated assistant to complete forms (49%)
2. Explaining state voting procedures and/or election deadlines to voters (19%)
3. Providing paper or PDF copies of voting forms to voter (15%)

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<sup>77</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey DoS VAO, question 10

<sup>78</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of DoS VAOs, question 12

<sup>79</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of DoS VAOs, question 13

<sup>80</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of DoS VAOs, question 15

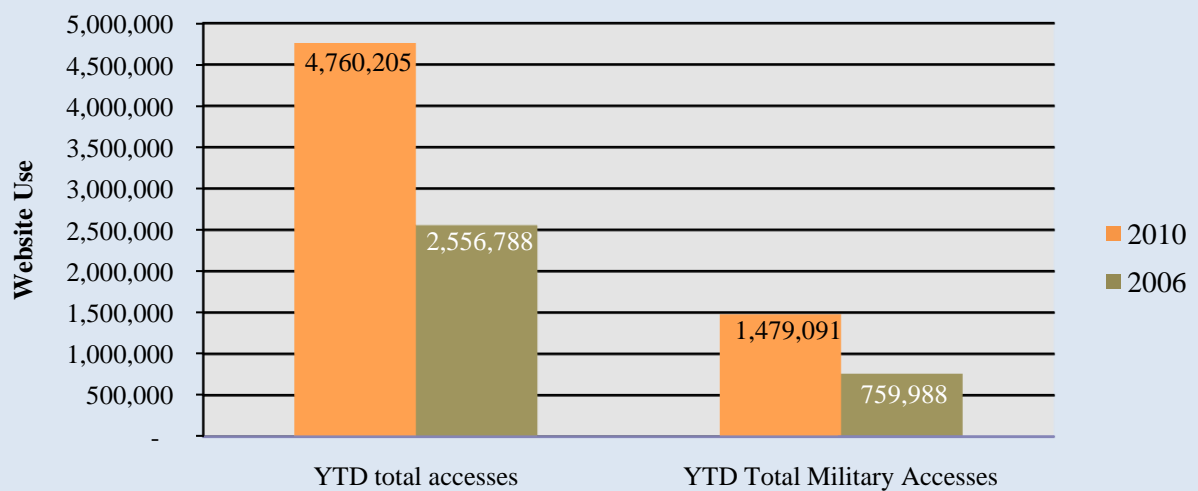


### III.b. FVAP.gov

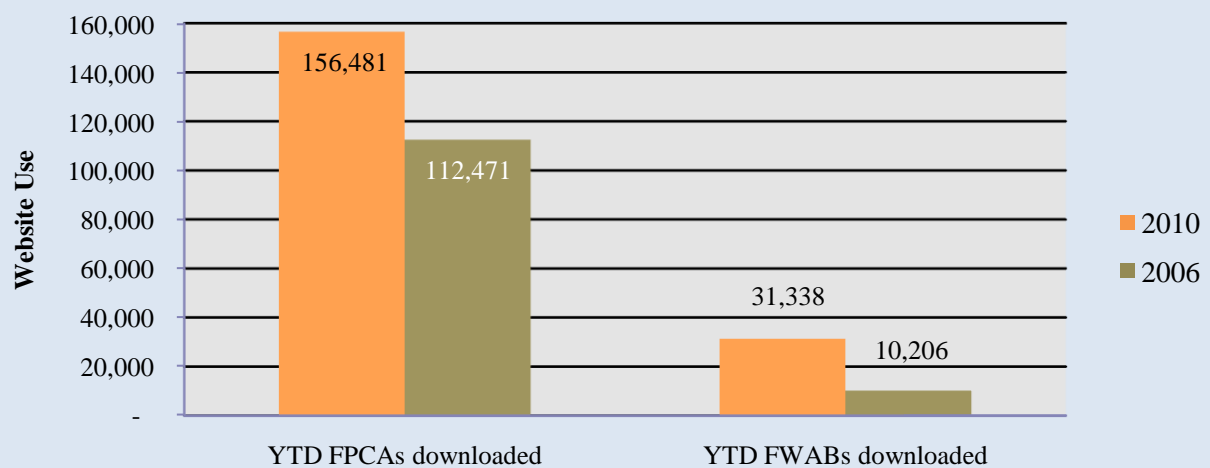
The FVAP website ([www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)) was completely redesigned in 2008 and in 2010 increased the functionality of FVAP.gov, making it not only a website but also a portal linking the voter directly to the enhanced online State and local jurisdiction voting assistance services mandated by the *MOVE Act*.

Each UOCAVA population uses the FVAP website ([www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)). From January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010, the FVAP website had over 6.9 million hits.

**Figure 27: FVAP.gov Website Use  
2010 vs 2006**



**Figure 28: Online Form Usage at FVAP.gov  
2010 vs 2006**



- 26% of LEOs visited the FVAP website at least once and most said it was useful (96%)<sup>81</sup>
- 98% of UVAOs that accessed and used the FVAP website found it useful,<sup>82</sup> and,
- 99% of DoS VAOs that accessed and used the FVAP website found it useful.<sup>83</sup>

For most *UOCAVA* voters, the issue does not seem to be whether or not the information available on the FVAP website is useful (they do), rather that they cannot find, or do not know about, the website in the first place.

Because of the small but consequential variations in military and overseas civilian voting law from State-to-State, errors do still occur. To combat the issues with errors, FVAP shifted its online presence and website from a simple voting assistance service provider to a portal connecting voters quickly, easily, and seamlessly with their State and local election officials' military voting systems.<sup>84</sup> If a State or local election jurisdiction has its own electronic military voting support systems, per the FVAP philosophy, the voter is presented the State/local system first.

In 2010, FVAP's efforts focused on enhancing the user's experience through the deployment of direct voting assistance tools. This represented the first step in a longer term effort to launch a comprehensive portal that will permit a dynamic exchange of information with FVAP stakeholders.

Therefore, in 2010, FVAP began retooling its website to provide direct-to-the-voter assistance by electronically representing the information currently published in its hard copy Voting Assistance Guide. Beyond capturing State-by-State election information and key election information such as election deadlines and others milestones for applying and successfully casting a ballot, FVAP launched its Automated Register, Request and Receive (R3) Ballot Process as a web-based wizard to "walk" a voter through the administrative environment of completing the FPCA and Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) form successfully, compliant with State law, and pursuant to Section 581(b) of the *MOVE Act*.

The FPCA and FWAB wizards remains a permanent fixture to the FVAP.gov website and judging by the level of usage, their intuitive nature is well-demonstrated in contrast to FVAP's more traditional paper-based forms available for download, printing and manual completion.

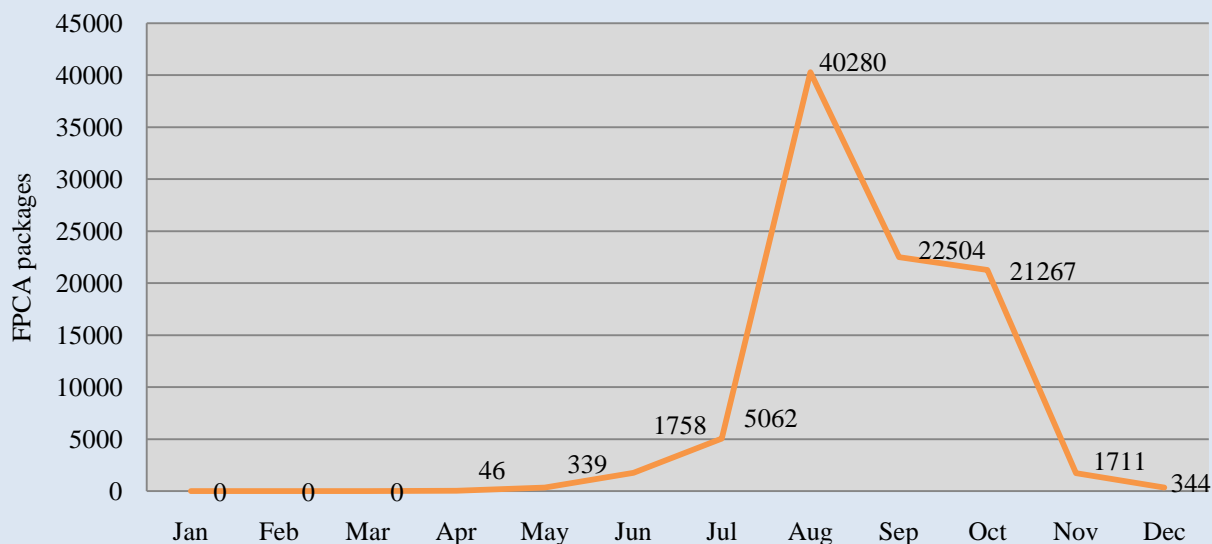
<sup>81</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of LEOs, question 56 and 57

<sup>82</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 34

<sup>83</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of DoS VAOs, question 28

<sup>84</sup> Creating a portal of information to inform absent uniformed services voters regarding registration procedures and absentee ballot procedures to be used by such voters with respect to elections for Federal office is also a requirement of *UOCAVA* as amended by the *MOVE Act* in 2009 (*UOCAVA* Sec 103B (a)(1)).

**Figure 29: 2010 FPCA PDF Package Downloads from FVAP.gov**



The wizards intuitively walk the qualifying military or civilian overseas voter through the completion of FVAP’s two standard forms, the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Each aspect of the R3 permits the visitor to select his or her State of residence and enter the relevant contact information. The FPCA is universally accepted throughout the United States as an application for an absentee ballot and serves as at least temporary voter registration, although a number of States now accept the FPCA as a permanent voter registration application.

The FWAB is used primarily as an emergency ballot for those voters who have applied for, but have not yet received their state ballot, and offers the ability to cast votes for federal offices.

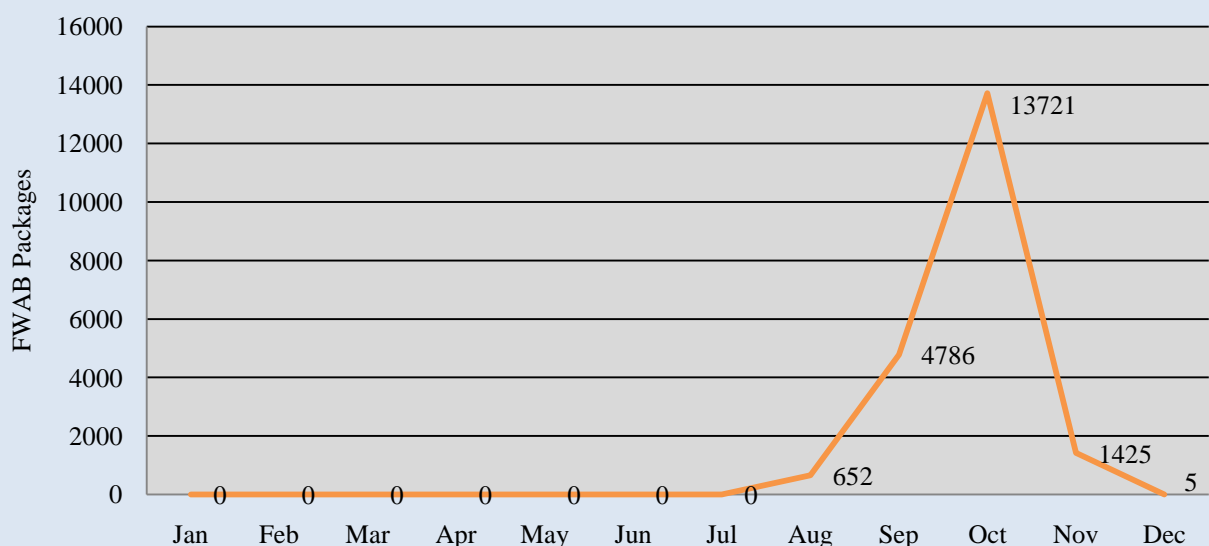
Voters are encouraged to submit a FWAB as soon as possible to ensure that they are able to cast a ballot, at a minimum, in elections for federal office. Some States allow voters to use it in State elections, and/or as a simultaneous voter registration request and absentee ballot. Due to the importance of casting votes for all elections, FVAP remains committed to exploring innovative ways to offer a full ballot to a voter just as if they were a traditional absentee voter within the United States.

The FWAB wizard further automates the proper expression of voter intent by automatically importing federal candidate information based on the voter’s zipcode classification and corresponding U.S. Congressional District. Rather than permitting potential problems with legibility or typographical errors, the FWAB wizard provides the proper spelling and party affiliation of the candidates for federal office, but still allows the voter to vote by indicating a political party only (and not specific candidate by name) for that race, or to write-in a candidate’s name, as allowed under *UOCAVA*.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> 42 USC 1973ff-2(c)

By using online tools, voters not only get the requirements correct, they are also saving time and therefore more successful in voting absentee. Just like the FPCA wizard, the FWAB wizard was successful as well.

**Figure 30: 2010 FWAB PDF Package Downloads from FVAP.gov**



The wizards automatically populate the form with the information provided by the voter, who is then able to print the form, sign it, and send it to his or her LEO.

### III.c. FVAP Voting Assistance Guide

Second to the website in terms of use is the *Voting Assistance Guide* (VAG or *Guide*). The *Guide* is a compilation of absentee voting regulations, laws, deadlines, and procedures. The *Guide* is the primary source of information on absentee voting procedures for registering to vote, requesting a ballot, and voting in each of the fifty States, four territories, and the District of Columbia. The 2007-2008 *Guide* allowed significant editing of the State-by-State instructions by individual State election offices. This led to considerable variation in format and terminology between each of the State sections, and resulted in a 460 page *Guide*. To simplify these instructions, FVAP exercised much greater editorial discipline in the 2009-2010 *Guide*, editing the instructions to be straightforward and consistent from State-to-State and reducing the total pages to 309. FVAP is currently coordinating a completely revised 2012-2013 *Voting Assistance Guide* with the individual States, which will be distributed in October of this year.

In preparation for the 2010 Federal election cycle, FVAP printed an estimated 64,000 *Guides* and distributed them through the Services and the Department of State worldwide to military units and installations, embassies, and consulates. 85% of DoS VAOs reported receiving the 2008-09 *Guide*.<sup>86</sup> 67% of Unit Voting Assistance Officers received the *Guide* in

<sup>86</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of DoS VAOs, question 18

preparation for the 2008 election cycle.<sup>87</sup> Both groups of VAOs found the *Guide* useful and the number one use was the State-by-State information on registration and voting absentee.<sup>88</sup>

### **III.d. FVAP Partners with MPSA and USPS to move ballots**

In addition to offering in-house resources, FVAP worked with other organizations to improve the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process. For example, in 2011, to help combat address problems, the United States Postal Service (USPS) is looking into putting military change of address notices that are standardized in accordance with USPS requirements into the national change of address database. This means, LEOs may be able to look up before sending ballots or other voting materials to voters.

In 2010 FVAP and the Military Postal Service Agency worked in collaboration with the USPS to provide expedited service for absentee ballots going to and coming from overseas DoD military post offices. The Special Handling Service, which began September 1 and ran through November 24, ensured that all postal personnel expeditiously processed and transported outbound and returning ballots with APO and FPO addresses.<sup>89</sup> To complete this process, the USPS developed Label 11 - DoD to place on these returning ballots. The Label 11 - DoD was placed on the ballot envelopes by postal clerks in overseas Military Post Offices where the identifying information on Label 11 - DoD was scanned into the USPS Product Tracking System. This also provided tracking of the ballot from the Military Post Office until delivery to the local election office. This tracking information could be accessed over the Internet by the military member who mailed the ballot. To further accelerate the process, State election offices encouraged LEOs to separate APO and FPO destined ballots by their respective International Service Center United States Military gateways.

FVAP also worked very closely with the Military Postal System Agency (MPSA) and the U.S. Postal Service to ensure FVAP's success, and provided \$550,000 in funds to help MPSA buy bar-code scanners to provide online ballot tracking for MPSA and the voter. FVAP made voters aware of this service through print and electronic advertisements, and internal communications via the Services and MPSA.

MPSA executed an aggressive Express Mail campaign to achieve the mandated seven-day return delivery, only having to use its delivery standard; the average ballot return transit time was 5.2 days, with 92% of the ballots delivered within seven days. For U.S. Navy ships at sea, historically units that suffered particularly long mail delivery times, the average ballot return time was eight days.

According to the MPSA data from 2010, 68,848 ballots were sent out from election offices through MPSA to be dispatched to voters. 49% of those ballots were not addressed correctly. 30% were redirected to new addresses and 19% were returned to sender due to

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<sup>87</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs, question 24.

<sup>88</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of UVAOs and DoS VAOs, questions 26 and 20 respectively

<sup>89</sup> Army Post Office / Fleet Post Office - At each APO or FPO, there is an equivalent to real U.S. Post Office that is staffed by members of the respective branch of service. While the layout of each APO/FPO varies by location, they operate just like a "real" Post Office.

insufficient address.<sup>90</sup> A complete analysis of MPSA's 2010 election program are addressed in its report, "The 2010 Analysis of the Military Postal System Compliance with the MOVE Act" available on the FVAP website.

In addition to the MPSA working to correct addresses to combat the issue of undeliverable voting materials, FVAP has access to some uniformed service members' address information. If a LEO needs information on a service member and if the information is releasable, FVAP can share an additional address or contact methods. Unfortunately, in the past this system has proved to be of limited use because FVAP often is not contacted until the ballot has already been returned as undeliverable, with little chance that even if the correct address is identified, the ballot will be able to make the transit again in time to be successfully cast. Furthermore, many of the Services' privacy and force protection requirements preclude FVAP from releasing the data to LEOs. With limited success, FVAP works with the Service leadership to reach out directly to members to overcome these restrictions. For the future, FVAP is exploring a number of options to substantially reduce the incidence of undeliverable ballots because of improper addresses:

- Creating online military database portals through which Statewide Voter Registration System databases could be compared to at least flag those *UOCAVA* addresses which may have changed, and possibly automatically notify *UOCAVA* voters of such discrepancies so that revised FPCAs may be submitted;
- Developing automated systems whereby uniformed service voters can choose to allow the Department to automatically send an updated FPCA in their name at every change of address; and
- Leveraging the electronic ballot transmission requirements of the *MOVE Act*, the relative stability of military email addresses, and the global email address lists most Services maintain, to expedite at least a notification of a ballot delivery address issue, and hopefully to use the email address as an alternate address for ballot transmission.

### III.e. Fax and Telephone Services

FVAP offers many services to LEOs, United States Military members, and overseas civilians. For example, the FVAP website, toll free access from over 50 countries, toll free fax numbers from over 50 countries, training for election officials, voting guides, and motivational and information posters. However, many *UOCAVA* voters do not know these resources are available. For example, 92% of spouses of active duty military were not aware of the toll-free telephone services.<sup>91</sup> 64% of active duty military didn't use the services because they didn't know about it.<sup>92</sup> Of the 93% of LEOs who did not use the toll free telephone service, 14% indicated they did not use it because they did not know about it. Through a new outreach plan and increased efforts to interact directly with the voter, FVAP seeks to improve these rates.

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<sup>90</sup> This information comes from the 2010 MPSA Postal Voting Survey.

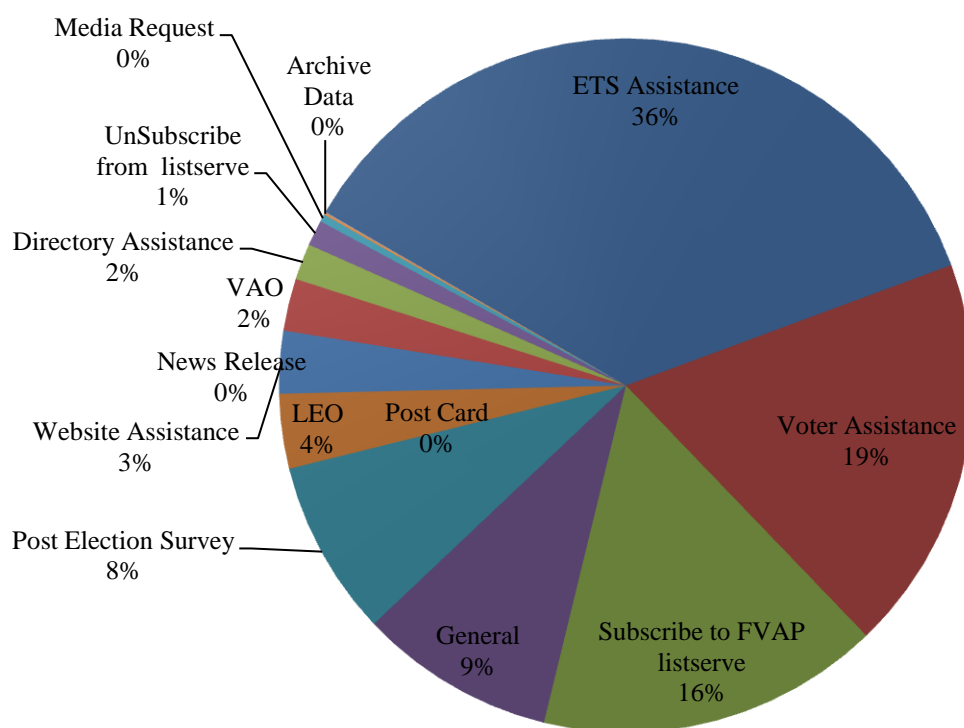
<sup>91</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of ADM Spouse, question 43

<sup>92</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of ADM, question 70

In addition to the normal calling system, in preparation for the 2010 election cycle, FVAP opened a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week call center on July 15, 2010. FVAP enhanced its existing service by teaming with the Navy's Global Distance 24 hour Support Center to respond immediately to emails, calls, faxes and online chat from military members, their families and overseas voters worldwide. Toll-free numbers from 67 countries to reach the call center are available on the FVAP.gov website. The call center made voting information accessible to voters living in other time zones and ensures that all issues are addressed.

Over the life of the call center, 10,982 transactions were processed. Requests covered a variety of topics. Figure 31 details those support requests by topic. The majority of support requests were fax transactions in support of the Electronic Transmission Service Component. The second largest generator of support requests were emails, which encompassed the Electronic Transmission Service transactions as well as inquiries for support made by voters. Far fewer transactions were generated through phone calls made by potential customers; only 16.3% of all support requests were generated through a phone call. Direct voter assistance with questions or other issues accounted for only 18% of all transactions. Follow-up calls regarding the Local Election Official portion of the survey account for 8.8% of all transactions during the period.

**Figure 31: Call Center support request, by Type of request**



### III.f. Notifications and Election Alerts

The *MOVE Act* also requires the Department to notify uniformed services voters of upcoming elections. By partnering with the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), FVAP



sent force-wide emails to every member of the military 90, 60, and 30 days prior to the November general election, detailing what actions voters should take at each stage in the voting process. For example, the 90-day prior email focused on voter registration and absentee ballot application, the availability of the wizards at FVAP.gov, and the need to make timely application for an absentee ballot. The 60-day email focused on requesting the absentee ballot and the availability of the wizards at FVAP.gov. Finally, the 30-day prior email focused on sending in ballots, using the FWAB (particularly through the FWAB wizard) and the availability of online ballot delivery and marking wizards through the FVAP.gov portal. These emails reached approximately 1.4 million active duty military and approximately 1.5 million reserve component members.

In addition to sending notifications FVAP used an opt-in email service to send out election alerts notifying overseas civilians, voting assistance officers and media that an election was approaching. FVAP is unable at this time to calculate the reach of this system as it is meant to be shared by all who receive it; however, FVAP is working to further develop this listserve so that users can specify their States and local jurisdictions for those specific alerts, and so that the listserve can track more generic voter data through web analytics.

### **III.g. Marketing and Social Networking**

In 2010, only 4% of Active Duty Military Spouses and only 18% of active duty military indicated they visited the FVAP.gov website, and of those who did not visit it, 78% and 30%, respectively, said it was because they did not know about it.<sup>93</sup> However, for active duty military, the 18% FVAP.gov visit rate in 2010 is up from 16% in 2006, and all of these voter assistance systems are of little use if the voter is not aware of them.

To make military voters and their voting age dependents aware of the services available to them through FVAP.gov, and through their unit and installation Voting Assistance Officers, FVAP engaged a contractor to address requirements of the *MOVE Act* and develop a comprehensive voting assistance communications and “marketing” plan. The goal was to expand outreach to voters, improve brand recognition of FVAP.gov, drive users to online tools, and raise overall awareness of key milestones and dates for voters to meet in order to successfully cast a ballot. Only by bringing more *UOCAVA* voters to the FVAP website portal can it provide a more direct-to-the-voter assistance program.

As discussed before, much of the voting success and voting assistance failure is in the junior ranks and amongst younger members of the active duty military, possibly because of their limited voting experience. In an attempt to reach this younger voting population, FVAP is engaged in an evolving communications strategy that utilizes social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. FVAP uses social networking to share important absentee voting deadlines and procedures, and to collaborate with voters on improving the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process. These tools are very powerful in an environment where technology has become key to reaching as many voters as possible.

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<sup>93</sup> 2010 Post Election Survey of ADM question 60 and 64. 2010 Post Election Survey of Spouses of ADM questions 37.



Social networking platforms are recognized as the information tools of choice among 18-to-25-year-olds, many of whom do not read newspapers, tune in to network news or visit official Web sites. This is also the age group demographic that is associated with the lowest voting rates and which makes up the majority of today's uniformed services.

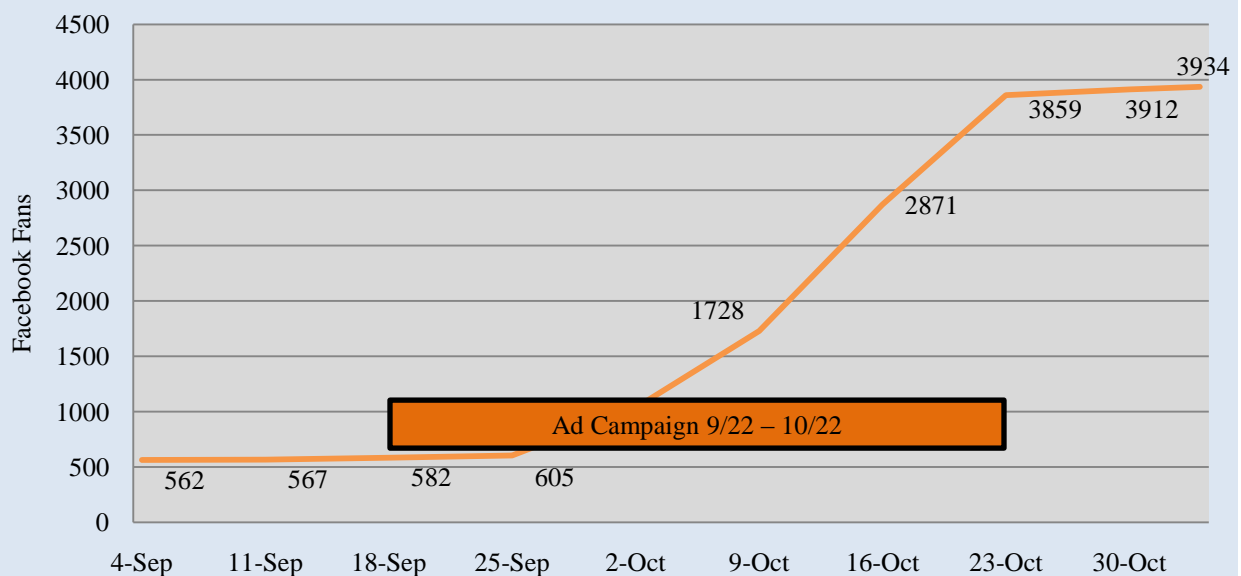
Social networking enables FVAP to participate in a two-way engagement with all UOCAVA voters. FVAP interacts with all UOCAVA voters by posting real time alerts, answering questions and getting feedback quickly; for example, FVAP announces ballot deadline reminders leading up to specific elections.

The purpose of using social networking is to offer a greater variety of resources for all DoD and non-DoD voters and to inform and educate them on the UOCAVA absentee voting process. All information posted on the networks is posted on the official FVAP website.

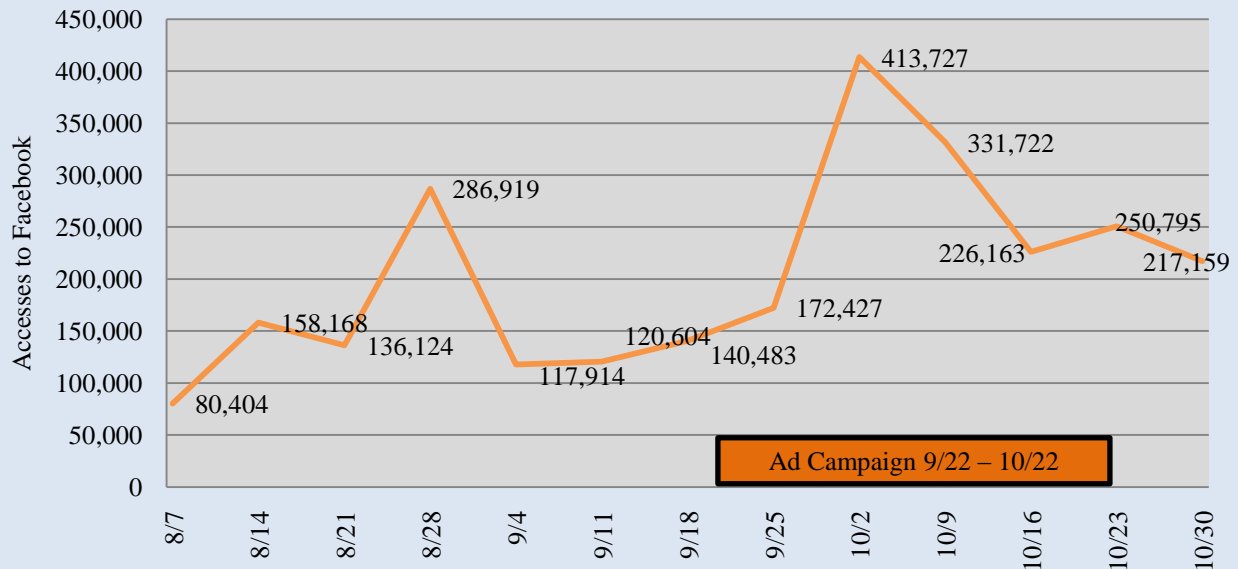
In addition to social networking, in 2010 stories and advertisements on absentee voting were run on the American Forces Radio and Television Service, the American Forces Network, the Pentagon Channel, American Forces Information Service, and Defense Link, as well as in private and military-focused print publications such as *Stars and Stripes*, *Army/Navy/Air Force Times*, the *International Herald Tribune* and other overseas publications.

As a result of the ad campaign, hits to the website and social networking sites significantly increased. The online advertisements and Facebook campaign ran from September 22 through October 22. The Facebook campaign served over 20million impressions and generated over 10,000 engagements, resulting in nearly 3,300 new fans of the FVAP page in only 4 weeks.

**Figure 32: Facebook Fans During 2010 Ad Campaign**

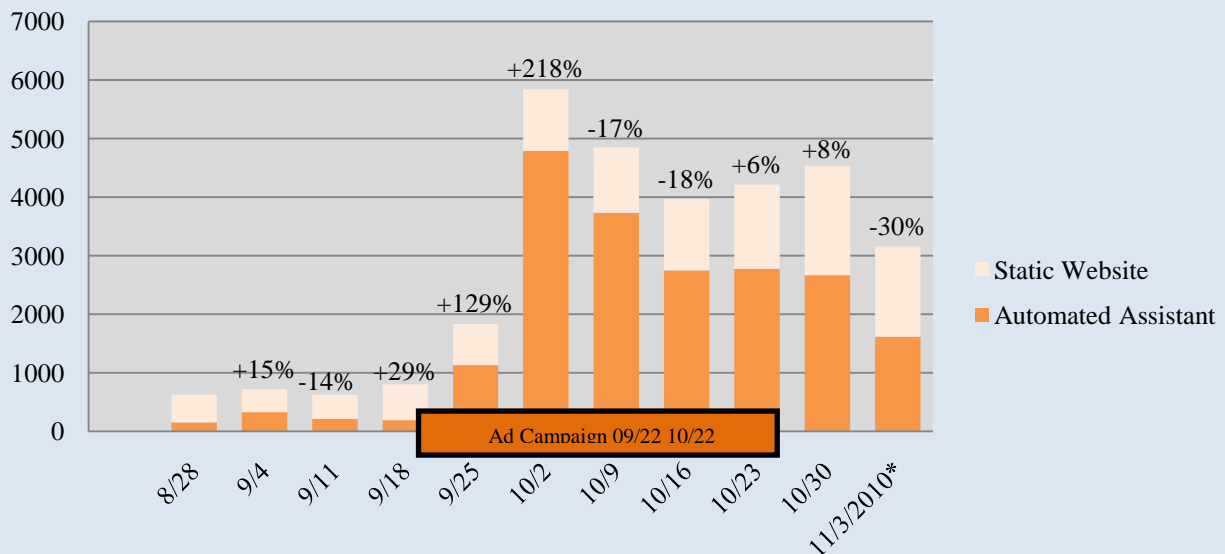


**Figure 33: Website Accesses during 2010 Ad Campaign**



While FVAP does not have direct metrics of on-site traffic within the FVAP.gov portal, nor is it able to link such FVAP.gov usage to any of the marketing campaigns (mostly because of the limits in using web analytic tools in DoD sponsored websites), it is clear that FWAB requests increased by 129% after four days of online advertising activity and 218% the following week.

**Figure 34: FWAB Downloads during 2010 Ad Campaign**



\*Static site is through 11/6

FVAP will continue to research communications efforts and adjust them so voters are becoming more aware of the resources available to them.

## IV. Federal and State Cooperation

FVAP works with the States and other voting organizations to improve the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process. In preparation for the 2010 election cycle FVAP sent two legislative initiative letters, attended and presented in 5 States and to over 1,100 election officials, and attended eight national election official conferences. And despite all of the successes of FVAP's legislative initiatives, electronic alternative efforts, and the passage of the *MOVE Act*, post-2010 election survey data appears to confirm what we learned after the 2008 election: military and overseas voters still face greater difficulties in successfully casting a ballot than does the general population, and timely delivery and return of ballots appears to be the leading cause of that failure.

### IV.a. Legislative Initiatives

Every year FVAP reviews State legislation on absentee voting to see what can be improved. Then the FVAP Director makes written suggestions to the States on how their laws and regulations can be improved. This is done through a Legislative Initiatives package that is sent to each State election director, and as started with the 2009 Legislative Initiatives letters, to the leaders of each State legislative chamber. FVAP has testified before numerous State legislative hearings and conferences to support legislation for such laws.

The 2009-2010 initiatives focus on sending ballots to voters at least 45 days before the election, as now mandated by the *MOVE Act*. FVAP also proposes the expanded use of email and online transmission for all election materials – especially the transmission of blank ballots by at least two electronic methods – and allowing for the FWAB to be used for all stages of the voting process and in all elections.

Table 4  
*Legislative Initiatives Passed by Year – 2000-2010*

Initiative	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2008	2010	% Change (08 to 10)
1. 45 days transit time	42	42	42	41	41	41	41	0
2. Email and online transmission of voting materials	46	48	48	49	49	51	54	+5.88%
3. Expand FWAB use	6	6	8	9	11	21	41	+95.24%
4. Adoption of Recommendations of the ULC**	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	
5. Emergency authority to state Chief Election Official	9	11	12	14	15	18	32	+77.78%
6. Remove notarization and witnessing requirement	48	49	49	48	50	50	50	0
7. Late registration procedures	23	24	25	26	27	30	34	+13.33%
8. Provide state special write-in ballot	26	27	27	27	27	29	NA*	NA*
9. Enfranchise citizens who have never resided in the U.S.	8	8	9	12	13	16	24	+50%

\*State special write-in ballots confuse voters and the capability desired by this previous legislative initiative can be better served by States allowing the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) to be used for State and Local elections as well.

\*\*The Uniform Law Commission (ULC), an interstate commission made up of State legal experts appointed and elected by their State governments or commissions, has presented the “Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act” (UMOVA) for adoption by the States.

To gauge how FVAP is doing with regard to encouraging legislative changes in the States, develop future strategic goal-planning for FVAP, and to help States prioritize legislation, FVAP created an internal scoring system of priorities. FVAP evaluated its current Legislative Initiatives with regard to the impact on absentee voting by Uniformed Service members and overseas citizens, both as separate populations and collectively. It then sorted these initiatives according to the degree by which they affected these populations, taking into consideration the major factors that hinder these groups’ ability to successfully vote absentee. That analysis indicated three initiatives provided the most benefit to the voters: 45 day ballot transit time prior to Election Day, the use of multiple modes of electronic transmission, and expanded use of the Federal Write-In Absentee ballot to include, in addition to general elections, primary, run-off and special elections for federal, State and local offices. These three initiatives, therefore, received the highest weighting, totaling 75%.

In the fall of 2009, there were only 10 States at the 75% mark; as of the first week of September 2011, there are 37. In the fall of 2009 the mean State score was 53%; as of September 1, 2011 it is 79%. This is a clear reflection of the work the Department is doing with the States, and of the States themselves, in improving legislation for *UOCAVA* voters. Given that FVAP’s legislative priorities also align with many of the new *MOVE Act* requirements, it is indicative of the positive effect federal mandates had on improving *UOCAVA* voting opportunity.

## IV.b. State Electronic Options

In the 2008 General Election, long delivery times through traditional mail methods and frequent military personnel moves and deployments were likely significant contributors to the 33% military absentee ballots return failure rate. Improving these voter success rates is the highest Strategic Goal for FVAP: bringing the *UOCAVA* voter success rate in line with—or exceeding—the general absentee population’s voter success rates by 2016.

Given the inherent delays in postal mail delivery, and the opportunity the electronic transmission requirement of the *MOVE Act* presented States to develop the best electronic ballot delivery systems possible, FVAP engaged in an historic State-specific online ballot delivery and online marking system, called the Electronic Voting Support Wizard program (EVSU). EVSU delivered a precinct-level ballot, with all federal, State and local elections, and in most cases, allowed the voter to also mark their ballot online, for hard-copy print out, wet signature, and postal return.

In the past, FVAP-provided electronic absentee ballot delivery systems have been centrally procured, providing only one architectural option for State and local election officials. EVSU, on the other hand, allowed the States to define the system and election administration requirements of the system, which FVAP developed into a federal contract for the State. Because of the focus on individual State requirements, State and local adoption rose substantially, and ballot downloads increased more than 16-fold over prior systems, as detailed in Table 4.

The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010* (Public Law 111-84) was signed on October 28, 2009 and the EVSU pilot project went live approximately one year later in time for the general election on November 2, 2010. The EVSU pilot project allowed absent uniformed servicemembers and overseas voters to download and print-out a ballot online. The service member could then mark their ballot and mail it back to their jurisdiction. However, the State maintained control over all election administration procedures throughout the election. This approach reinforced FVAP’s effort to buttress state and local election official activities, not replace them.

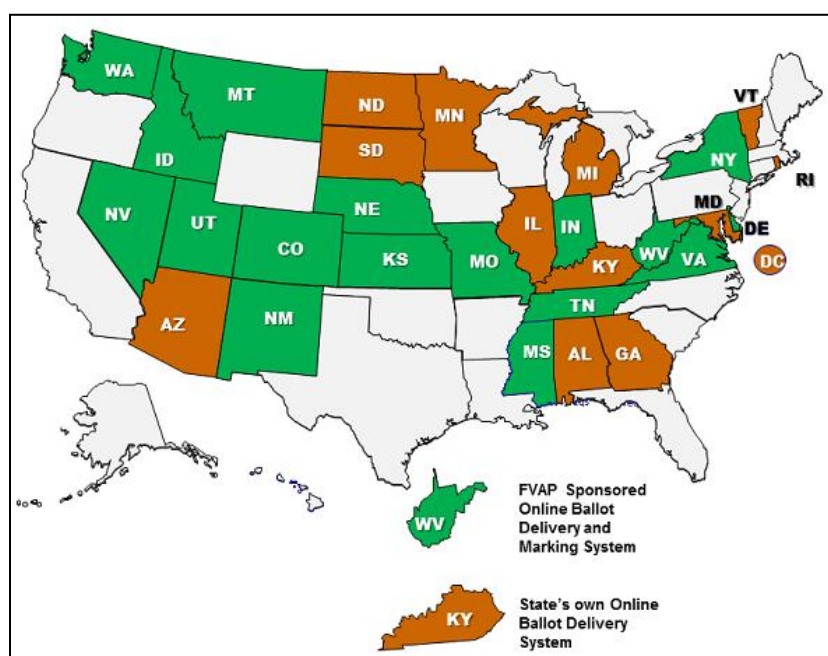
**Table 5**  
*State Supported Systems and Results*

	2004	2006	2006	2008	2010
	2004 IVAS	IVAS #1	IVAS #2	VRBD	EVSU
# of States	7	8	3	8	17
# of Counties	108	470	101	480	780
# of Ballots	17	Unknown	35	124	3,454

The EVSW pilot project allowed absent uniformed service members and overseas voters to download and print-out a ballot online. The Service member could then mark their ballot and mail it back to their jurisdiction. However, the State maintained control over all election administration procedures throughout the election. This approach reinforced FVAP's effort to buttress state and local election official activities, not replace them.

A total of 20 states initially participated in this effort, with seventeen states going "live" for the 2010 election (Figure 35). In addition, 14 States deployed their own online ballot delivery and marking systems for military voters. The FVAP.gov portal steered military and overseas voters to the State online ballot delivery and marking wizards, regardless of whether they were funded by FVAP or not.

**Figure 35 States having Online Ballot Wizards**



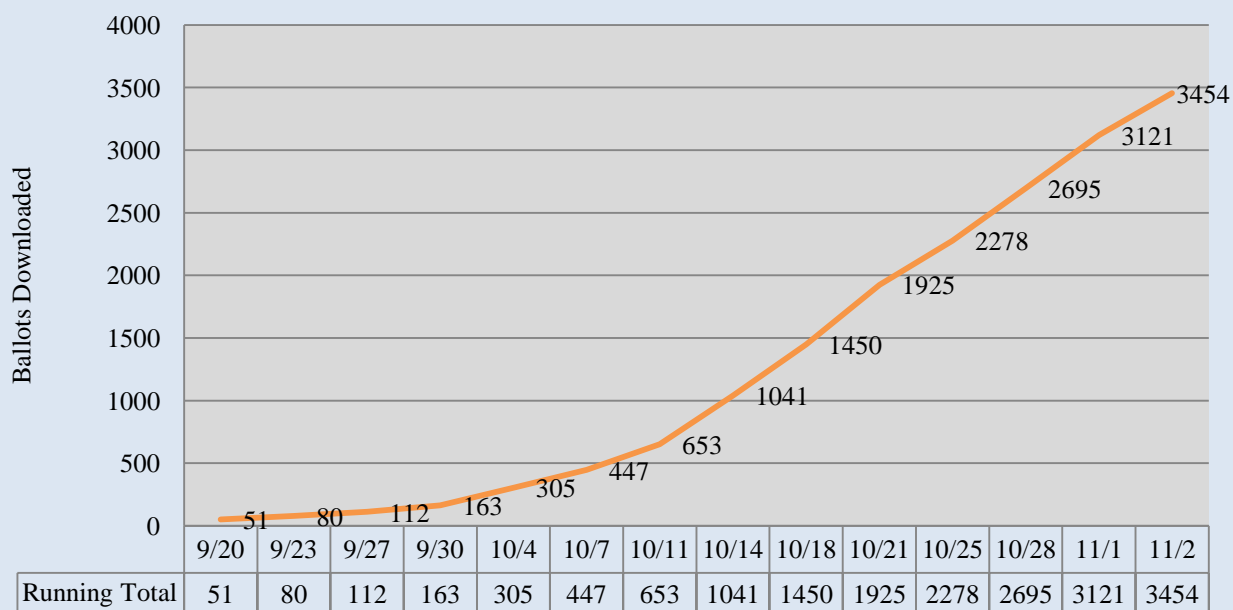
The Electronic Voting Support Wizard (EVSW) pilot project

EVSW intended to bring FVAP one step closer to this goal by serving as a means to explore the practical use of technology to streamline the voting process for *UOCAVA* voters. Unlike the current offering from FVAP.gov for the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, the EVSW intended to offer a full balloting experience to a *UOCAVA* voter rather than simply offering the ability to cast a vote in federal or state contests.

The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010* (Public Law 111-84) was signed on October 28, 2009 and the EVSW pilot project went live approximately one year later in time for the general election on November 2, 2010. The EVSW pilot project allowed absent uniformed Service members, their dependents and overseas citizens to easily complete their Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot by choosing their candidates from a list. A total 3,454 ballots were downloaded from the systems, significantly cutting ballot transit time to these voters from 20 or 30 days to being able to download ballots in 20 or 30 milliseconds. However, systems

developed and deployed by States themselves appear to have substantially greater system utilization and ballot download than the FVAP-procured systems. FVAP is assessing the reasons for this, but initial analysis indicates systems developed and deployed by the States themselves are more fully integrated with existing election administration systems, voter databases, and communications systems, making it much easier for election officials to effectively communicate with their voters.

**Figure 36: Running Total of Ballots Downloaded in EVSW**



FVAP is currently preparing its report on Lessons Learned from the implementation of the EVSW in 2010 and will transmit this report to Congress by the end of 2011. Initial conclusions, however, are that the initiative provided States much greater flexibility to meet the *MOVE Act* electronic provision requirements and ensured their voters were able to receive, vote and return their ballots in time to meet the States' ballot deadlines. Further, FVAP believes that both email "push" of electronic absentee ballots, as well as online download "pull" is necessary for military personnel to have adequate opportunity to receive their ballots online. FVAP encourages all States to provide at least both methods of electronic ballot delivery, and will continue to work with them to develop such systems.

The success of FVAP's efforts with the EVSW and the FPCA/FWAB wizards' implementation required substantial coordination with all of the U.S. States and Territories for capturing various State election law requirements and facilitating the translation of these into functional requirements for EVSW deployments and the continued implementation of the FPCA/FWAB wizards.

#### **IV.c. *MOVE Act* Improvements**

Since enactment of the *MOVE Act*, the Department of Defense has moved aggressively to improve, simplify, and make the military absentee voting process more accessible, through



innovative technological tools and vigorous voter education and outreach. Further implementation of the changes to the *UOCAVA Act* as mandated by the *MOVE Act*, as well as more time for those changes to become the norm in military and overseas voting administration, will help focus limited federal, State and local resources on the primary problem faced by military voters – receiving their ballot in enough time to vote and return it in time to be counted.

Conclusive results on the effects of the *MOVE Act* are premature given the ongoing work with the remainder of the post-election surveys and Election Assistance Commission data collection, and given that 2010 was the first election for which *MOVE Act* requirements were in effect. However, given the continued use of the sound statistical methodology used in the Department’s 2006, 2008, and 2010 post-election surveys, the DoD’s ability to track voter success and identify key areas of failure has dramatically improved.

In support of FVAP’s requirements pursuant to the 2010 NDAA, an iterative process was undertaken to reposition FVAP’s online presence from a website to a centralized resource for its key stakeholders: Voting Assistance Officers, Local Election Officials and, most importantly, Uniformed and Civilian Overseas Voters. In 2010, FVAP’s efforts focused on enhancing the user’s experience through the deployment of direct voting assistance tools. This represented the first step in a longer term effort to launch a comprehensive portal that will permit a dynamic exchange of information with FVAP stakeholders. To state it in a simple way, FVAP shifted its online presence and website from a simple voting assistance service provider to a portal connecting voters quickly, easily, and seamlessly with their State and local election officials’ military voting systems. If a State or local election jurisdiction has its own electronic military voting support systems, per the FVAP philosophy, the voter is presented the State/local system first.

#### **IV.c.i. Installation Voter Assistance Offices**

The *MOVE Act* directs the Service Secretaries to designate offices on each military installation as Voter Assistance Offices. The *MOVE Act* prescribes that these offices provide information and direct assistance on voter registration and absentee ballot procedures to Uniformed Services members and their family members whenever a service member:

- In/Out-processing a new duty station;
- Changes in address;
- Deploys overseas for at least six months or returns from such a deployment; and
- Requests such assistance.<sup>94</sup>

Separately, the Act authorizes the Secretary of Defense to designate Installation Voter Assistance (IVA) Offices as voter registration agencies (under the National Voter Registration

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<sup>94</sup> Data was only submitted by three of the Services (USAF, USA, and USN) and the data submitted was not consistent or as directed by DTM 10-21. As a result of the inconsistency of the data and after having discussions with the Services, FVAP forwarded a memo to the SSVR providing amplifying guidance regarding the metrics requirements. Once complete data is available this section will be updated.



Act, or NVRA). The Department issued a Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) to the Services to implement IVA Offices in November 2010.

The Services' *NVRA* and *MOVE Act* implementation activities include:

**U.S. Army.** The Army incorporated the requirements of implementing an Installation Voter Assistance Office on each installation in the 2010 – 2011 Army Voting Action Plan. The Senior Army Voting Representative stated that after assessing the requirements he determined the Army collateral duty IVAOs can fulfill the role on the installation.

The Installation Voter Assistance Offices are located at the installation In & Out Processing Center or the Army Community Service offices, based on the decisions of respective Commanders. The offices are comprised of two collateral duty civilians or one civilian and one military member. The Installation Voter Assistance Offices will be established at domestic US, European, Pacific and Korean facilities.

To conduct outreach to spouses and military dependents, the Army provides voting information and materials to spouses and dependents through Family Readiness Groups (FRGs). Materials are pre-positioned at the Army Community Service offices, Commissaries, Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) exchanges and Army Post Offices (APOs). The Senior Army Voting Representative (SSVR) and The Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) send out voting reminders several times during the election cycle via Army Knowledge Online (AKO), which includes spouses and dependents. The reminders include an attachment of the FPCA or FWAB depending on the timeline of events.

In addition, the SSVR and SMA produced a voting news story and Public Service Announcement (PSA), which is advertised on the DoD Pentagon Channel, Armed Forces Network world-wide and the Army & Air Force Exchange Service in stores. VAOs target spouses and dependents on the installation during the Special Emphasis Months; Armed Forces Voters Week, Armed Forces Voter Month and Absentee Voters Week. VAOs set up assistance tables and booths in high traffic areas on the installation to educate voters and to hand out FPCAs or FWABs.

The Army also released a MILPER message on December 9, 2010 additional guidance.

**Navy.** The Navy distributed a message to the Regional Chiefs of Staff and Executive Directors from the Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) with the requirements to establish a Voters Assistance Office at the installations in anticipation of the DTM, recommending the offices be located where service members and their family members frequent, such as a Personnel Support Detachment (PSD). The decision as to location of the office is at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. Pre-DTM guidance was issued for all Navy Installations to establish a voting office.

In the past, the Navy partnered with the Ombudsman program to provide resources and information about the voting program. For the 2010 election cycle the Navy provided VAO training to unit ombudsmen via webinar. There were two trainings scheduled: one for ombudsmen overseas and one for ombudsmen in the States. Since there are 2,000 ombudsmen

throughout the Navy, the goal was to post the training on the ombudsman website where the training can be accessed by all ombudsmen.

**Marine Corps.** The Marine Corps is conducting a job/work analysis to evaluate the feasibility of establishing IVA Offices in the ID Card Centers throughout the Marine Corps. HQMC is recommended two primary locations (Joint Reception Centers or ID Card offices), with the ultimate decision residing with the Base/Station Commanders. All Marine Corps Installations were directed to have the IVA Office established 60 to 90 days after the signed DTM was provided, or by the end of March 2011.

The Marine Corps has subsequently released a MARADMIN directing Installations to have IVA Offices established within 30 days of the message which was released on July 11<sup>th</sup>. As of September 1, 2011, the Marine Corps is reporting the establishment of 18 out of 18 IVA Offices.

**Air Force.** Manpower and functional managers at Headquarters Air Force started implementation work in February 2010. A directive message from the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force (CSAF) was transmitted to all Major Command (MAJCOM) Commanders, requiring them to stand up Installation Voter Assistance Offices on each Air Force Base.

Installation Voter Assistance Office locations are determined by each installation commander using the recommended area from the directive-type memo (DTM). (e.g., "to be located with identification card processing facility," etc.). and to place the IVA Office directly under the Installation Commander's command.

The Service manning plan is to continue the IVAO position in an "additional duty" status, and providing for an alternate additional duty IVAO as currently required by Air Force Instruction and the Air Force Voting Plan. No funding has been allocated in the *MOVE Act* to specifically fund a full time equivalent (FTE) position for this requirement.

Installations affected include all permanent Air Force bases, approximately 78 total, including one steady state deployed location. At joint bases, each installation has its own IVA Office and set of IVAOs, reporting to their own respective SVAOs. Deployed locations are also currently manned with additional duty IVAOs but are not termed an "installation" requiring an IVA Office with NVRA designation (with the exception of Al Udeid, Qatar).

IVA Offices were directed to be established 60 days from the release of the signed DTM (February 2, 2011), but the Chief of Staff of the Air Force required IVA Office establishment as soon as possible.

Air Force has already implemented *MOVE Act* requirements in the AF Voting Action Plan (since January 11, 2010), requiring:

- 30, 60, and 90-day notifications;
- Requiring assistance be provided to members deploying for six months or greater, and upon their return,
- Permanent change of station (both detaching and reporting); and

- Upon request.

**Coast Guard .** Historically, and given its relatively small and dispersed population, the Coast Guard did not use "Installation" voting offices, relying solely on each unit Voting Assistance Officer with reminders sent directly from Coast Guard Headquarters policy office or the Personnel Service Center via message traffic. Essentially, the Headquarters served as the single "installation" overseeing all unit voting officers. Although not subject to the IVA Office requirements of the *MOVE Act*, the Coast Guard is still pursuing a policy to designate "installations" for this purpose. Once completed, a revised Service Voting Action Plan will also be developed for implementation of such offices.

Given the significant challenges faced by the Services in establishing IVAOs, FVAP also provided direct training and policy assistance to the Services, by retaining contractor services to conduct onsite training and robust print training and IVA Office procedure documents. The handbook and training package provided detailed instructions on creating the IVAOs, specific guidelines for the operation of the office and outlines in detail the new responsibilities of the installation for offering military, dependant and civilian voting assistance. The handbook and instructional training is also available online at the FVAP website. To complement the handbook and instructional training, FMG conducted 36 instructional training workshops at major Service installations worldwide during July and August 2010, and an additional three webinar presentations in September 2010.

If further assistance was required, installations had 24-hour toll-free access to the FVAP Call Center throughout the summer and fall of 2010.

FVAP hosts monthly status conference calls and quarterly face-to-face meetings, with all the Service Voting Action Officers to monitor implementation, identify problems requiring additional assistance, and to provide assistance to the Services in implementing these requirements, as well as ad hoc meetings when specific problems are identified.

The Installation Voter Assistance Office provisions of the *MOVE Act* are costly, manpower intensive, and require significant effort for the Services to implement. Furthermore, while the change of duty station process is being moved away from installation level facilities to unit level execution supported by online applications, the IVA Office provision means voting assistance will soon be the only change of duty station or pre-/post-deployment activity handled at the installation level. All the voting assistance mandated by the *MOVE Act*, as well as that mandated for voter registration facilities under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), can be accomplished at the unit level, at far less cost and effort.

The Services were further hindered in their ability to establish Installation Voter Assistance Offices due to a final fiscal year 2011 Defense Appropriations Act not being enacted until April 2011, and the restrictions on new program starts under the Continuing Resolution Authority for fiscal year 2011 until that final appropriations act was enacted. Once the final Service appropriations were enacted, and new starts were authorized, the Services moved forward with the IVA Office implementation requirement, and as of September 1, 2011 report:

- **U.S. Army.** 51 out of 51 offices established,

- **U.S. Air Force.** 69 out of 74 offices established,<sup>95</sup>
- **U.S. Coast Guard.** 13 out of 13 offices established; although the Coast Guard is not required to establish IVA Offices,
- **U.S. Navy.** 68 out of 68 offices established, and
- **U.S. Marine Corps.** 18 out of 18 offices established.

To assist the Services implement this requirement given the logistical hurdles and issues regarding delayed program starts, FVAP provided extensive in-person and webinar training for military installations, conducting onsite training in June and July 2010 at 36 military concentration areas worldwide. This training also provided complete training manuals and administrative document templates, much like an “IVA Office in a Box” turnkey set-up. FVAP hosts monthly status conference calls and quarterly face-to-face meetings with the Service Voting Action Officers to monitor implementation, identify problems requiring additional assistance, and to provide assistance to the Services in implementing these requirements.

## V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Continuing the trends first reported after the 2008 election, when adjusted to the demographics of the civilian voting age population, the military is not only registered at higher rates, but also voting at higher rates than their civilian counterparts. Furthermore, active duty military voter participation improved appreciably between 2006 and 2010, likely due to the improvements of the *MOVE Act* and shift in FVAP’s program focus.

However, given that election interest and “planned to vote” rates were much higher than the actual voter participation rates, there is cause for concern that somewhere along the way, there may be problems in the process., especially for younger voters. An important element in determining if this is, in fact, a significant problem for military voters is determining comparable metrics of national CVAP election interest, “plan-to-vote” rates, and voter “follow-through” rates as a point of comparison for the military voters. FVAP will continue to study each part of the process from all angles and work to improve these rates.

Because there is no clearly understood population of overseas civilians, FVAP cannot at this time make any conclusions about this population however FVAP will continue to work to define this population and study how best to reach and help them in the absentee voting process.

To continue implementation of the *MOVE Act* and prepare for the 2012 election cycle, FVAP is continuing to improve its processes, programs and tools. FVAP is especially focused on expanding functionality of the current website portal and tools, specifically strengthening registration and ballot wizards, expanding availability of databases, and deployment of online training for Voting Assistance Officers. Additionally, FVAP is expanding its advertising and

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<sup>95</sup> The USAF is working to contact Installation Commanders of remaining installations and USAF SVAO is maintaining contact with MAJCOM VAOs and IVAOs. The deadline for installation office establishment is 30 September 2011.

outreach efforts, and continuing to work with the States to streamline the *UOCAVA* voting process.

In 2010 FVAP initiated and completed many activities to help military and overseas voters. While all of them were successful and well liked by those who used them, awareness and use of them was poor. FVAP will continue to research how to increase awareness of these programs.

Almost all of the programs FVAP completed required State-federal cooperation. In addition, FVAP has worked continuously with the States to improve legislation for military and overseas citizens. With the passage of the *MOVE Act* and the Department's coordination with the States, there was a significant increase from 2008 to 2010 in initiatives passed, and the overall State legislative *UOCAVA* voting environment has improved dramatically.

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DMDC's Survey Technology Branch, under the guidance of Frederick Licari, Branch Chief, is responsible for the distribution of datasets outside of DMDC and maintaining records on compliance with the Privacy Act and 32 CFR 219.

The Department of State, under the guidance of Liz Gracon, previous Chief Voting Action Officer, and Jack Markey, current Chief Voting Action Officer, is responsible for outreach to overseas citizens.

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