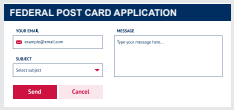
FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FVAP RESOURCE USE AND OVERSEAS VOTING

RESOURCE USE

29% Any FVAP Resource

17% FVAP.gov



5% Online Assistant

1% Staff Support

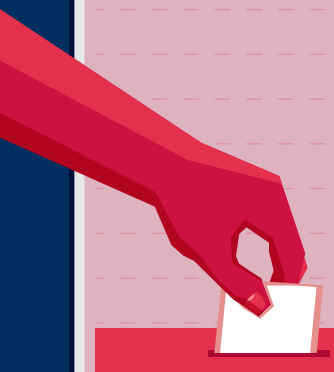
USERS OF FVAP RESOURCES

YOUNGER
LESS EDUCATED

25% 75%

OLDER
MORE EDUCATED

INEXPERIENCED VOTERS



FVAP Non-User
19% VOTING RATE

FVAP User
28% VOTING RATE

EXPERIENCED VOTERS

FVAP Non-User
29% VOTING RATE

FVAP User
38% VOTING RATE

INEXPERIENCED VOTERS BENEFITTED MORE FROM THE USE OF FVAP RESOURCES

THEIR VOTING RATE INCREASED BY NEARLY 50%

Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2016). FVAP Resource Use and Experience Among Overseas Citizens in the 2014 Election

RESEARCH SUMMARY

FVAP RESOURCE USE AND EXPERIENCE AMONG OVERSEAS CITIZENS IN THE 2014 ELECTION

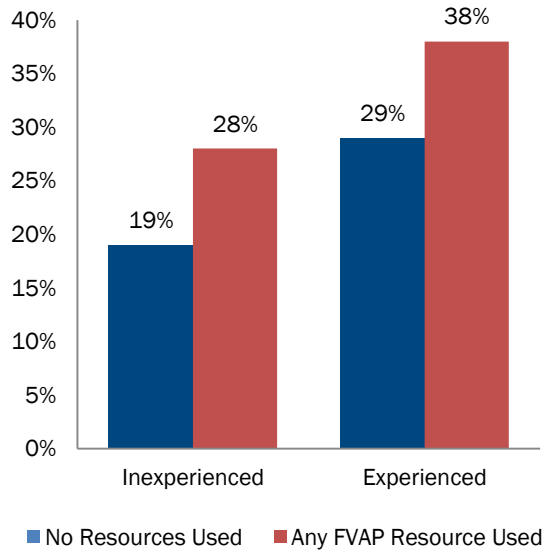
FVAP assistance resources help overseas citizens overcome inexperience with the voting process and successfully return their absentee ballots.

This research note examines the extent to which FVAP voting assistance resources are used by overseas citizens and assesses their effectiveness in helping inexperienced overseas citizens vote.

Background. Previous research has shown that active duty military personnel who used FVAP resources were significantly more likely to register and vote, but this research has not been extended to the overseas citizen population.[1] Inexperienced overseas voters are less familiar with the absentee voting process and are assimilating into a new environment, making them more in need of voting assistance resources.

Methods. The Overseas Citizen Population Survey (OCPS) asked a representative sample of overseas citizens who requested an absentee ballot for the 2014 General Election whether or not they had used FVAP resources for assistance. State vote history files showed whether or not OCPS respondents voted in 2014, and if they had previous experience voting from overseas. These data were used to examine patterns of FVAP resource use and voting among ballot requesters of different levels of prior overseas voting experience.

Results. FVAP resources were associated with an increased likelihood of voting, particularly among those without previous overseas voting experience. The likelihood of voting increased by almost 50 percent among inexperienced ballot requesters who used an FVAP resource. FVAP.gov was the most commonly utilized resource. All FVAP resources, including FVAP.gov, the online assistant and staff support, were positively associated with voting, consistent with helping users overcome experience barriers to overseas voting.



Inexperienced ballot requesters tended to be younger, less educated and living in countries with fewer eligible overseas voters. FVAP users tended to be older and residing in countries with fewer eligible overseas voters.

Conclusions. For overseas citizens, both the use of FVAP voting assistance resources and prior voting experience are associated with an increased likelihood of voting. FVAP outreach campaigns should target overseas citizens likely to benefit the most from these resources, particularly those in countries and demographic groups with low rates of resource usage or high rates of inexperience.

[1] Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2014*). Assessing the impact of FVAP Resources*; Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2015). *The effects of the 2010 FVAP website redesign on voting in the active duty military population.*

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FVAP RESEARCH NOTE

FVAP Resource Use and Experience Among Overseas Citizens in the 2014 Election

Introduction

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), under the authority of the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (*UOCAVA*), works to ensure Service members, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so, from anywhere in the world. Previous research evaluated the importance of resource use for Service members and found that those who used FVAP resources, such as FVAP.gov and the FVAP online assistant, had a higher likelihood of voting.[1] The use of FVAP resources by the overseas citizen population and how this affects their voting behavior has not yet been studied.

This research note builds on previous analyses and examines FVAP resource use within a subpopulation of overseas citizens—namely ballot requesters—using data from FVAP's 2014 Overseas Citizen Population Survey (OCPS). This research note focuses on how FVAP resources benefit inexperienced ballot requesters, who have never voted overseas before and who are most in need of voting assistance. This analysis of the OCPS differs from other research because it analyzes a new survey, 2014 midterm election data and a unique population of ballot requesters.[2] For the purposes of this analysis, ballot requesters were registered overseas voters who requested that an absentee ballot be sent to an overseas address. They had registered to vote and requested a ballot but may have needed additional resources to correctly complete and return their ballot. Focusing on this population presents an opportunity to study the impact of FVAP resources on the pivotal ballot return segment of the overseas voting process. Additionally, this analysis tests assumptions of voting behavior on an understudied population during a midterm election year.

Ballot Requesters–registered overseas citizens who requested an absentee ballot for the 2014 General Election be sent to an overseas address.

Inexperienced Ballot Requesters–have never voted from overseas before 2014.

Results show that ballot requesters who used any FVAP resource, particularly FVAP.gov, were more likely to vote and that experienced ballot requesters were more likely to vote than those who were inexperienced. Resources were particularly helpful for those without prior overseas voting experience. Inexperienced ballot requesters who used any FVAP resource were as likely to vote as experienced nonusers. Use of any FVAP resource was associated with a nearly 50 percent increase in the likelihood that an inexperienced ballot requester voted. These findings suggest that FVAP should consider targeting countries and demographic groups with either low levels of FVAP resource use or high percentages of inexperienced ballot requesters.

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1 Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2014). *Assessing the impact of FVAP resources*. Retrieved from https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/ 2014_FVAP_Research-Note-2_Final_Approved.pdf. This research was extended to study the impact of the updated FVAP.gov and online resources. Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2015). *The effects of the 2010 FVAP website redesign on voting in the active duty military population*. Retrieved from https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/ FVAP/Reports/FVAP_RN5_20160107.pdf.

2 For a discussion of lower voter turnout in midterm election years see Jacobson, G. C., & Carson, J. L. (2015). *The politics of congressional elections*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Experience and Voting

The overseas voting process is different than the process for individuals living in the United States and requires acquiring different knowledge and skills. To participate in the election, overseas voters have to learn about their State's rules and regulations for registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot and returning their voted ballot. If overseas voters are registering and requesting an absentee ballot using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), they must know how to provide their classification status, driver's license or social security number (SSN), U.S. voting residence address, overseas mailing address and any additional information required by their State, as well as how and when to submit the completed form to their local election office.[3] For most States, the FPCA is valid for one calendar year, meaning most overseas voters will need to reregister every election year. If their application is complete, overseas voters are sent an absentee ballot and must return their voted ballot before the statutory deadline. If overseas voters have not received their absentee ballot at least 30 days before an election, they can submit a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), which includes the voter declaration/affirmation, as well as write-ins for election offices and ballot initiatives.

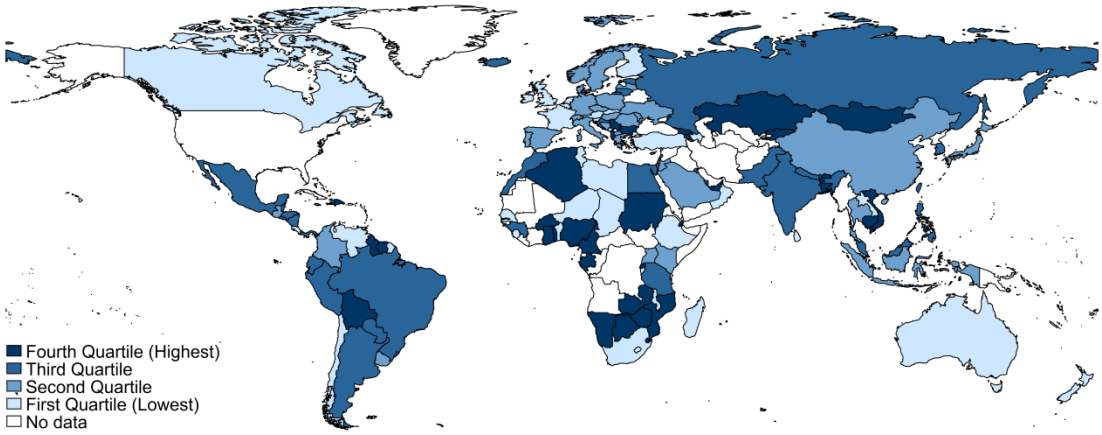
This overseas absentee voting process must be learned without the usual institutional and social structures in place that facilitate registration and voting in the United States. Moving overseas is a substantial life change. Sudden changes to an individual's social network, access to the internet, the national focus of the media, cultural norms, the predominant spoken language and the mail system may all impact the voting experience. In short, individuals may lose their established network of resources and services when they move overseas, making it more difficult to learn about and complete the voting process.

With experience, overseas citizens may learn to overcome the challenges and barriers to voting. In 2014, ballot requesters differed in how experienced they were with the absentee voting process. Controlling for the demographics of the OCPS sample, about 25 percent of ballot requesters in 2014 had never previously voted from overseas and may have had a greater need for overseas voting resources than more experienced ballot requesters.[4] Inexperienced ballot requesters were significantly more likely to be younger and less educated. They were also significantly more likely to reside in countries with lower GDP and a smaller eligible overseas voter population (see Table 2 in Appendix). Citizens with these demographic characteristics are the ones most likely to need resources to inform them how to vote from overseas.

3 The FPCA and FWAB ask voters to identify whether they are a member of the Uniformed Services, an eligible spouse or dependent; an activated National Guard member; a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States with intent to return or uncertain about returning; or a U.S. citizen that has never resided in the United States. An overseas citizen's voting residence may be the address in the State in which they were last domiciled immediately before leaving the United States, while in some cases they have familial connections there or have switched their residency.

4 The analysis of predicted inexperienced and experienced ballot requesters is not displayed. The predictions are weighted by nonresponse and post-stratification weights, and all control variables are held at their means so that the demographics of the sample more closely match those of the population.

FIGURE 1: INEXPERIENCED BALLOT REQUESTERS BY COUNTRY



Note: Map shows quartiles of average inexperienced ballot requesters by country. Inexperienced ballot requesters are defined as those who have never returned a ballot since moving overseas and becoming eligible. Darker shaded countries are more likely to need voting assistance due to a lack of voting experience.

Figure 1 shows the average percentage of inexperienced ballot requesters by country; darker shaded countries had a higher percentage of ballot requesters who had never previously voted from overseas before the 2014 election. Regionally, ballot requesters living in Africa, South Asia and Near Asia were more inexperienced, and ballot requesters living in East Asia, Europe and the Western Hemisphere were more experienced. Previous research has shown that the top 10 countries for eligible overseas citizens are Canada, United Kingdom, France, Israel, Japan, Australia, Germany, Costa Rica, Switzerland and Mexico.[5] Ballot requesters living in Mexico, Costa Rica, Australia, Israel and Switzerland are more likely to be inexperienced at voting than the average ballot requester in Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany (see Table 7 in Appendix). These high inexperienced regions and countries, particularly those with large eligible overseas citizen populations, are likely to see the most impact from FVAP voting resources.

5 Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2016). *Overseas citizen population analysis.* Available at FVAP.gov.

Resource Use and Voting

FVAP provides resources to citizens covered by *UOCAVA* to help them overcome barriers to voting from overseas. Previous research based on FVAP's 2012 Post-Election Voting Survey of the Active Duty Military (PEV-ADM) showed that the usage of FVAP.gov was associated with a higher likelihood of ADM registering and voting and that this association was stronger than the effect of using other institutional resources, such as Installation Voter Assistance Offices or Unit Voting Assistance Officers.[6] Research has also shown that improvements to FVAP.gov between 2008 and 2012 were associated with increases in the percentage of ADM who used the website and other FVAP online resources, such as the online assistant.[7]

The 2014 OCPS asked ballot requesters about their use of FVAP voting assistance in general, as well as about using FVAP.gov, the FVAP online assistant and FVAP staff support. Ballot requesters primarily obtain FVAP voting assistance through online resources available at FVAP.gov. FVAP.gov displays information from FVAP's Voting Assistance Guide (VAG), which instructs *UOCAVA* citizens on the nuances of voting absentee as well as State-specific information on eligibility for voting absentee and election deadlines for registering absentee, requesting an absentee ballot and returning an absentee ballot.

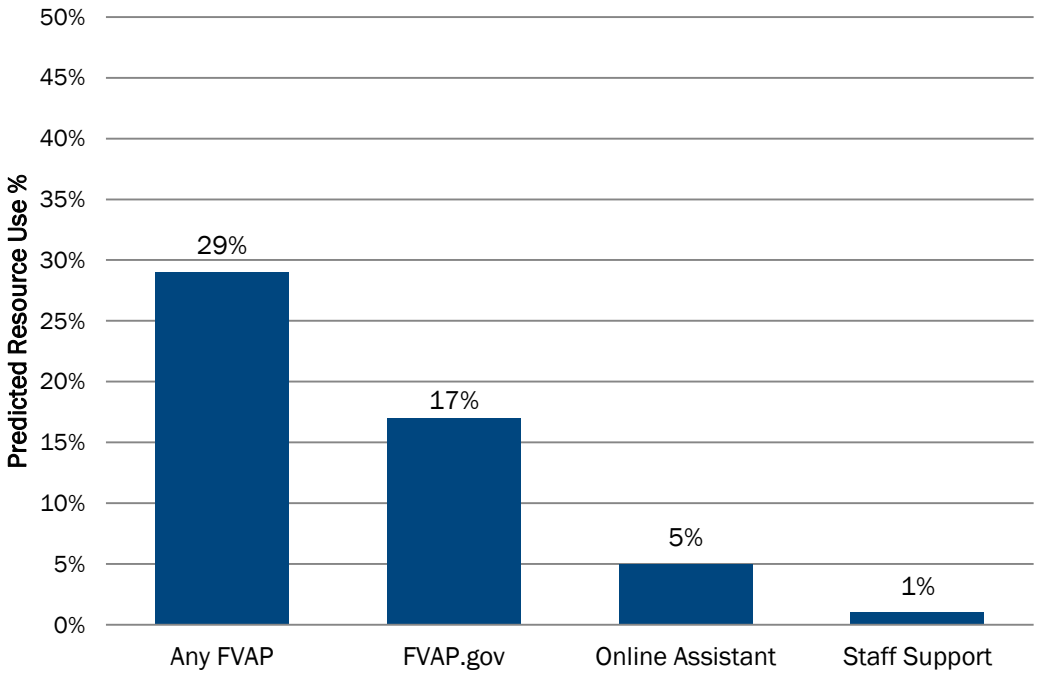
FVAP online resources focus on the FPCA and FWAB, both of which are critical components of the *UOCAVA* voting process. FVAP.gov visitors can find a thorough guide to completing the FPCA and FWAB for their State, including how to properly sign and submit their forms by mail, email or fax. Visitors can print a blank FPCA and FWAB if desired, though visitors are encouraged to use FVAP's online assistant. The online assistant utilizes a web-based interface that intuitively navigates users to complete the FPCA and FWAB by populating user information and candidate selections, reducing typographical errors and issues with legibility. The online assistant also ensures that both forms are consistent with the legal requirements of the user's State of legal residence.

FVAP staff support is available year round via phone and email. *UOCAVA*-eligible citizens, who contact FVAP staff support, are assisted by trained FVAP staff members who help them navigate through FVAP.gov and the online assistant, as well as answer questions about their State's absentee voting process.

6 Federal Voting Assistance Program (2014). *Assessing the impact of FVAP resources*.

7 Federal Voting Assistance Program (2015). *The effects of the 2010 FVAP website redesign on voting in the active duty military population*.

FIGURE 2: FVAP RESOURCE USE

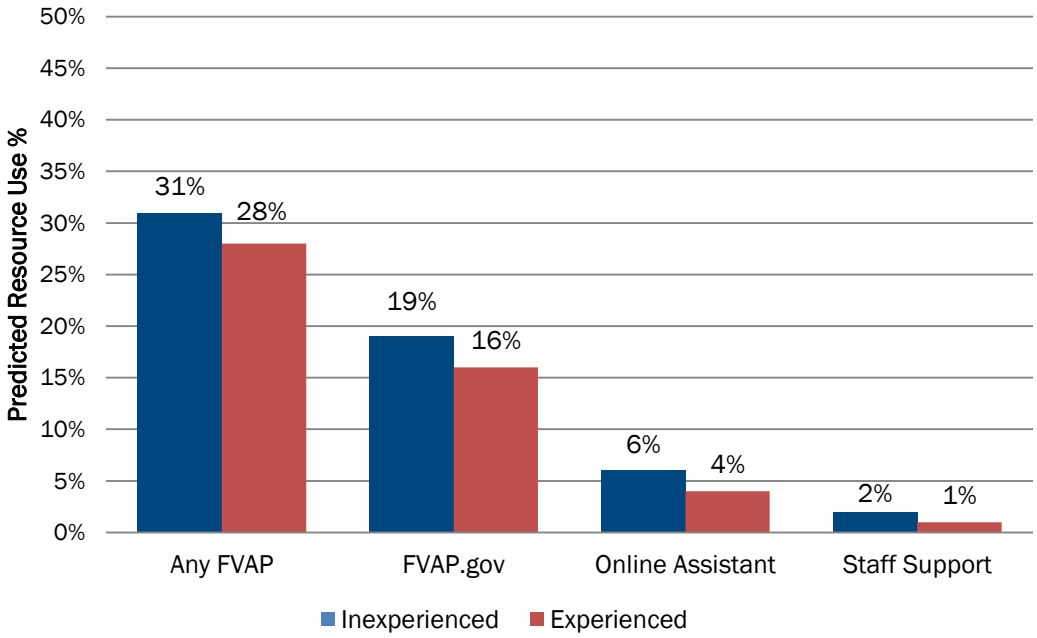


Note: The percentages are the predicted probability of using each resource, weighted, with all control variables held at their means so that the demographics of the sample more closely match those of the population. Any FVAP resource use is defined as whether the respondent marked any of the following survey items: sought voting information from FVAP, used FVAP.gov for voting assistance, used FVAP staff support for voting assistance, used the FVAP online assistant for voting assistance, visited FVAP.gov in preparation for the 2014 election or received information about voting procedures from FVAP.gov.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of ballot requesters who used any of three specific FVAP resources: FVAP.gov, the FVAP online assistant and FVAP staff support. In 2014, 17 percent of ballot requesters visited FVAP.gov; five percent reported using the online assistant and one percent said they used FVAP staff support. Relative to those who do not use these resources, FVAP users are significantly more likely to be older and reside in countries with smaller eligible overseas voter populations (see Table 3 in Appendix). Although resource use reported in the 2014 OCPS was relatively low, this was to be expected because the majority of ballot requesters tended to be experienced and, historically, fewer people vote during non-presidential election years, meaning fewer people require voting assistance resources.[8]

[8] Plane, D. L., & Gershtenson, J. (2004). Candidates' ideological locations, abstention, and turnout in U.S. midterm Senate elections. *Political Behavior*, *26*(1): 69-93.

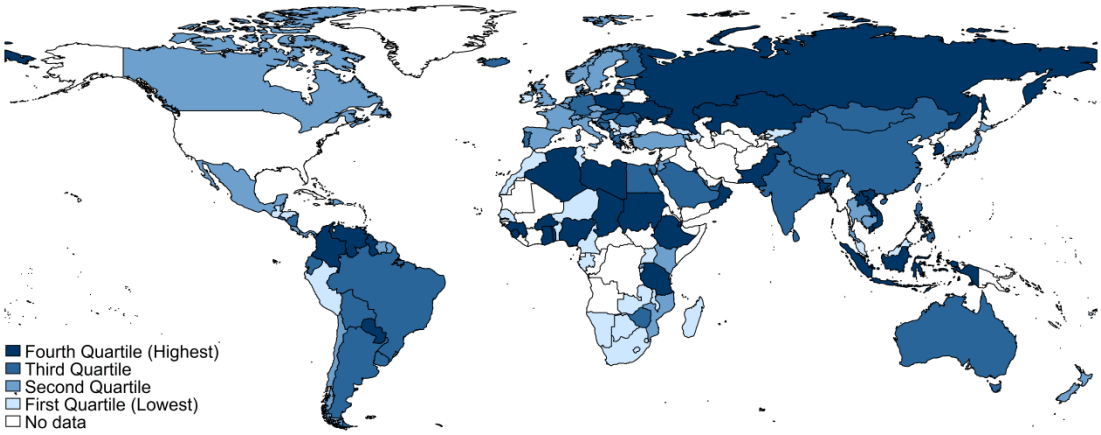
FIGURE 3: FVAP RESOURCE USE BY EXPERIENCE



Note: The percentages are the predicted probability of using a resource by experience, weighted, with all control variables held at their means so that the demographics of the sample more closely match those of the population. Any FVAP resource use is defined as whether the respondent marked any of the following survey items: sought voting information from FVAP, used FVAP.gov for voting assistance, used FVAP staff support for voting assistance, used the FVAP online assistant for voting assistance, visited FVAP.gov in preparation for the 2014 election or received information about voting procedures from FVAP.gov.

Figure 3 displays the percentage of inexperienced and experienced ballot requesters who reported using various FVAP resources, holding all other factors constant. Inexperienced ballot requesters were three percentage points higher in using any FVAP resource; three percentage points higher in using FVAP.gov; two percentage points higher in using the online assistant; and one percentage point higher in using FVAP staff support. This suggests that inexperienced ballot requesters were more likely to seek assistance from FVAP resources, though these descriptive differences are not statistically significant.

FIGURE 4: ANY FVAP RESOURCE USE BY COUNTRY



Note: Map shows quartiles of average FVAP resource use by country, with lighter shaded countries representing countries least likely to have used an FVAP resource for voting assistance. Any FVAP resource use is defined as whether the respondent marked any of the following survey items: sought voting information from FVAP, used FVAP.gov for voting assistance, used FVAP staff support for voting assistance, used the FVAP online assistant for voting assistance, visited FVAP.gov in preparation for the 2014 election or received information about voting procedures from FVAP.gov.

Figure 4 shows the average FVAP resource use by country; darker shaded countries had a higher percentage of ballot requesters that used any FVAP resource. Regionally, ballot requesters in the Western Hemisphere were least likely to use any FVAP resource, whereas ballot requesters in East and South Asia were the most likely to use any FVAP resource. Of the top countries for eligible overseas citizens, ballot requesters in Canada, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, on average, were the least likely to use FVAP resources, and Germany, France and Australia's ballot requesters had the highest levels of FVAP resource use (see Table 7 in Appendix). These low-resource-using regions and countries would likely benefit most from a targeted FVAP resource campaign.

Key Research Questions

The following two questions guide this analysis:

1. Does resource use increase the likelihood of voting for ballot requesters?
2. Do patterns of FVAP resource use and its effect on voting differ for ballot requesters with varying levels of voting experience?

Data and Methodology

The data used in these analyses are from the 2014 Overseas Citizen Population Survey (OCPS), conducted by Fors Marsh Group and FVAP. The 2014 OCPS was implemented through a mixed-mode design, in which mail and email reminders pushed individuals to respond via an online survey, although they had the option to respond via paper survey and a postage-paid return envelope. Data were collected from September 18, 2015, to December 9, 2015. The OCPS is representative of registered overseas voters who requested an absentee ballot for the 2014 General Election to be sent to an overseas address.

The primary dependent variable in these analyses is whether a respondent voted in 2014. To measure voting, data was compiled from State voter files that included records of returned ballots from 2000 to 2014. Ballot requesters who were listed as returning a ballot in their State vote history file in 2014 are considered "voters" in these analyses.[9]

Voted–has a record of returning a ballot in 2014 in State voter files.

Resource Users–used FVAP.gov, the FVAP online assistant or FVAP staff support in 2014.

Resource users in these analyses are ballot requesters who used one or more FVAP voting resources leading up to the 2014 General Election. The 2014 OCPS asked ballot requesters about a variety of absentee voting resources that may have facilitated ballot returns, including whether they used FVAP.gov, FVAP staff support and the FVAP online assistant, as well as if they received more general voting assistance from FVAP. These individual FVAP resource questions were aggregated into an index that measures whether a ballot requester used any FVAP resources.[10] FVAP resource users are hypothesized to have a higher likelihood of returning a ballot than nonusers because FVAP resources make it easier to overcome obstacles and vote.

For this study, inexperienced ballot requesters were conceptualized as those who were unfamiliar with the overseas voting process. In the 2014 OCPS, ballot requesters were asked how many years they had resided overseas. This question, along with the State vote history file, is used to determine the first election in which a ballot requester would have been eligible to vote from overseas. Inexperienced ballot requesters were measured as individuals who had never voted from overseas

9 It is possible that someone treated as "voted" in this analysis for returning a ballot could have had their vote rejected due to lateness, signature issues, missing postmarks, address requirements or other reasons, but returning a ballot is significant in that they completed enough of the voting process to stay listed on a State voter file, even if their vote was not counted in that election. Other ballot requesters may have attempted to vote, but their vote was never returned to their voting jurisdiction (e.g., because it was lost in the international mail system). Though they sent a ballot, their State has no record of them returning a ballot from overseas, therefore; they were considered a non-voter in these analyses.

10 The 2014 OCPS asked six questions about FVAP resources, three of which were overlapping questions about FVAP.gov. By collapsing a series of similar questions into an index, there is greater confidence that these analyses are measuring FVAP resource users and nonusers because they do not rely solely on the correct interpretation of a single question prompt.

prior to the 2014 General Election.[11] Inexperienced ballot requesters were hypothesized to have a lower likelihood of voting than experienced ballot requesters because they had not established familiarity with the overseas voting process and may not have known how to overcome common voting problems.[12]

To reduce the possibility of incorrectly claiming an effect of resource use or experience due to a biased sample or unconsidered factor, this study controlled for demographic differences among individuals, States and countries. Analyses in this research controlled for mobility, motivation, age, sex, race, education, marital status, survey method, State factors and country factors. Previous research has shown that older, more educated white and married individuals tend to vote more often than younger, less educated non-white and never married individuals.[13] Motivated individuals—defined as those with a history of returning a ballot prior to moving overseas—tend to be more likely to vote.[14] Ballot requesters registered to vote in States with highly competitive gubernatorial and senatorial elections in 2014 were expected to be more motivated to turn out to vote in a midterm election year.[15] Ballot requesters who resided in countries with more eligible overseas voters, higher gross domestic product (GDP), greater internet access and greater mobile phone access were expected to be more likely to vote than those in countries with more isolated eligible overseas voters, lower GDP, less internet access and less mobile phone access.

The research presented here used regression analysis to examine the voting behavior of FVAP resource users and nonusers, experienced ballot requesters and inexperienced ballot requesters and the interaction between these groups. The 2014 OCPS data included 8,078 eligible respondents who successfully completed the survey.[16] The analyses here were limited to the 6,787 ballot requesters who had non-missing data for their vote history, resource use, experience and demographic controls.[17] The data were weighted to account for sample members' probability of selection, reduce the risk of nonresponse bias, and ensure conformity with population totals from the sampling frame.

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11 They have no record of returning the ballot in any midterm or presidential election from overseas between 2000 and 2012, as measured in the State vote history file.

12 Green, D. P., & Shachar, R. (2000). Habit formation and political behaviour: Evidence of consuetude in voter turnout. *British Journal of Political Science*, 30(4): 561-573; Plutzer, E. (2002). Becoming a habitual voter: inertia, resources, and growth in young adulthood. *American Political Science Review, 96*(1): 41-56.

13 Fairdosi, A. S., & Rogowski, J. C. (2015). Candidate race, partisanship, and political participation: When do black candidates increase black turnout? *Political Research Quarterly*, 68(2): 337-349; Leighley, J. E., & Nagler, J. (2013*). Who votes now? Demographics, issues, inequality, and turnout in the United States.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Wolfinger, R. E., & Rosenstone, S. J. (1980). *Who votes?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

14 Panagopoulos, C. (2013). Extrinsic rewards, intrinsic motivation and voting. *The Journal of Politics, 75*(1): 266-280. Gerber, A. S., & Rogers, T. (2009). Descriptive social norms and motivation to vote: Everybody's voting and so should you. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(1): 178-191.

15 Nagel, J. H., & McNulty, J. E. (1996). Partisan effects of voter turnout in senatorial and gubernatorial elections. *American Political Science Review, 90*(4): 780-793.

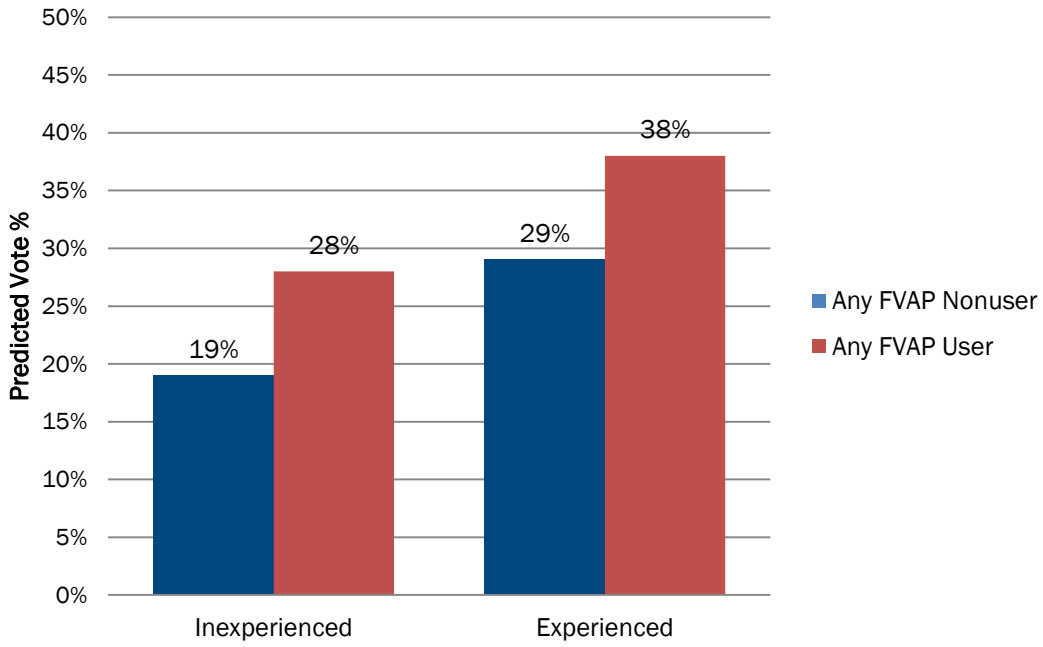
16 Eligible respondents in the 2014 OCPS responded to the survey and (1) met the sample criteria, (2) were within the 36,000 cases from States that provided separate absentee request voter files, (3) resided overseas on November 4, 2014, (4) were U.S. citizens and (5) completed at least 25 percent of the survey or gave valid answers to Q1 through Q6.

17 Missing respondents were less likely to return a ballot in 2014. They were equally likely to use any FVAP resource, the online assistant and staff support, but slightly more likely to use FVAP.gov than non-missing respondents. Missing respondents were also slightly more likely to be middle-aged, more educated, married and respond online than non-missing respondents and differ on various State and country controls.

Results

The analyses of the ballot requester population show that using an FVAP voting resource was associated with a higher likelihood of voting in the 2014 General Election. Experienced ballot requesters were significantly more likely to vote. Consistent with previous domestic and ADM voting research, the likelihood of voting was associated with an increase in age, education, motivation, competitiveness of elections and internet access (see Table 4 in Appendix). Male ballot requesters were more likely to vote than females, and never married ballot requesters were more likely to vote than those who were married or divorced.[18]

FIGURE 5: VOTE PROBABILITY BY EXPERIENCE, ANY FVAP RESOURCE USE

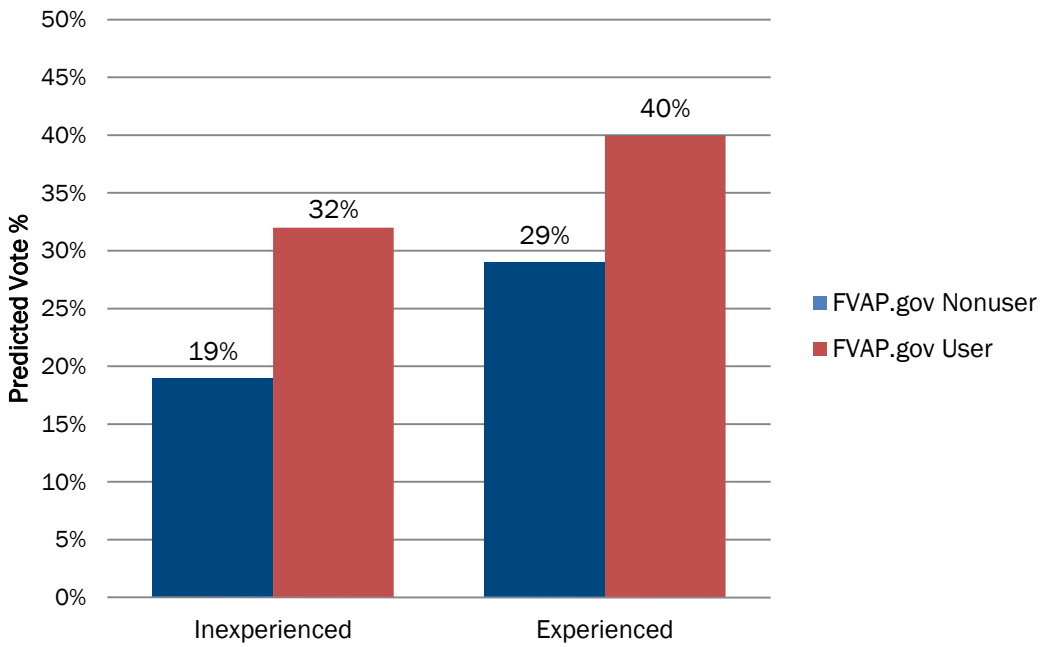


Note: Percentages show the predicted probability of voting for inexperienced ballot requesters and experienced ballot requesters, by any FVAP resource users, based on the model in Table 4 in Appendix. The predictions are weighted and all control variables are held at their means so that the demographics of the sample more closely match those of the population.

Figure 5 shows the likelihood of voting for inexperienced and experienced ballot requesters who did and did not use any FVAP resource (see Table 4 in Appendix). Controlling for all other factors, inexperienced ballot requesters who used any FVAP resource were nine percentage points higher more likely to vote in 2014 than nonusers. For inexperienced ballot requesters, FVAP resource use was associated with a 47 percent increase in the likelihood of voting, eliminating the gap between inexperienced and experienced ballot requesters. The results are consistent with FVAP voting resources assisting novice ballot requesters in overcoming their lack of voting experience.

18 Please note that the sign and direction of the control variables are model dependent, and hence, interpretation with respect to other reported models is not advised. Though married voters typically are more likely to vote, the relationship may differ in this analysis because it focuses on a subpopulation of overseas voters as opposed to domestic voters and uses data from a midterm election as opposed to a presidential election.

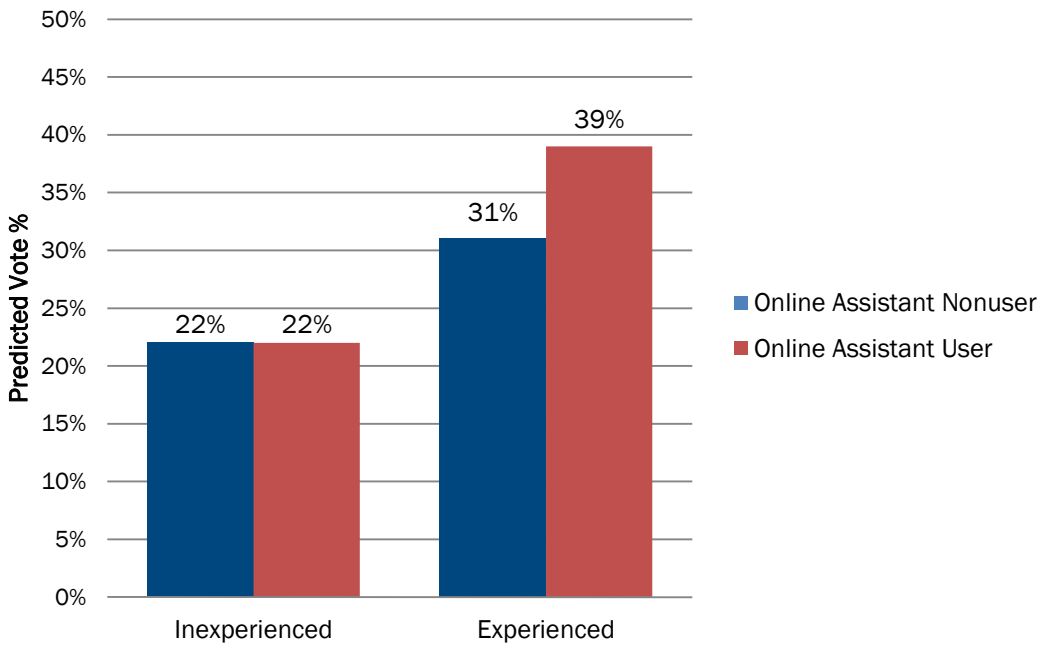
FIGURE 6: VOTE PROBABILITY BY EXPERIENCE, FVAP.GOV USE



Note: Percentages show the predicted probability of voting for inexperienced ballot requesters and experienced ballot requesters, by FVAP.gov resource users, based on the model in Table 5 in Appendix. The predictions are weighted and all control variables are held at their means so that the demographics of the sample more closely match those of the population.

Figure 6 shows similar results for ballot requesters who used FVAP.gov (see Table 5 in Appendix). Inexperienced ballot requesters who used FVAP.gov were 13 percentage points more likely to vote, whereas experienced ballot requesters were 11 percentage points more likely to vote if they used FVAP.gov, though this two percentage point difference in effect was not statistically significant. Use of FVAP.gov was associated with a 68 percent increase in the likelihood that an inexperienced ballot requester voted, making them three percentage points more likely to vote than experienced nonusers. The results are consistent with FVAP.gov helping ballot requesters overcome barriers and making the voting process easier for those without previous overseas voting experience.

FIGURE 7: VOTE PROBABILITY BY EXPERIENCE, FVAP ONLINE ASSISTANT USE



Note: Bars show the predicted probability of voting for inexperienced ballot requesters and experienced ballot requesters, by FVAP online assistant resource users, based on the model in Table 6 in Appendix. The predictions are weighted and all control variables are held at their means so that the demographics of the sample more closely match those of the population.

Figure 7 shows that inexperienced ballot requesters had an equal likelihood of voting based on whether or not they used the FVAP online assistant (see Table 6 in Appendix). Although individuals who used the online assistant were generally more likely to return a ballot, the relationship was not statistically significant. Measuring the effect of using the online assistant is limited by the nature of the ballot requester population and because only five percent reported using the resource. Nonetheless, results are generally consistent with analysis of other FVAP resources, suggesting the online assistant improves the likelihood of voting from overseas.[19]

19 Low levels of reported online assistant and staff support use may be related to the fact that survey questions asked about resources by name and name recognition may have been limited. Resource use is also correlated with ballot returns, and since less people vote in midterm elections, all FVAP resource use was expected to be lower in non-presidential election years as well.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Two key conclusions come from this analysis:

- Ballot requesters who used an FVAP resource were more likely to vote than nonusers.
- Inexperienced ballot requesters that used FVAP resources were as likely to vote as experienced nonusers, which is consistent with FVAP resources being used to overcome a lack of familiarity with the overseas voting process.

Based on these conclusions, there are several key recommendations:

- FVAP should consider targeted information campaigns for inexperienced overseas voters by targeting:
  - Countries with higher levels of inexperienced voters, such as Israel, Japan and Mexico.
  - Regions with higher levels of inexperienced voters, such as Africa, South Asia and Near Asia.
  - Demographic groups that are more likely to be inexperienced, particularly younger, less educated overseas voters.
- FVAP should increase awareness of and use of FVAP resources by targeting:
  - Countries with lower levels of FVAP resource use, including Canada, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Israel, Japan and Costa Rica.
  - Demographic groups less likely to use FVAP resources, particularly those who are younger and reside in less eligible overseas voter populated areas.
- FVAP should revise the 2016 OCPS to place greater emphasis on resource use by:
  - Briefly describing FVAP resources to survey respondents to overcome difficulties in name recognition and recall.
  - Focusing questions on the prevalence of using specific FVAP resources, such as FVAP.gov, the online assistant and staff support as opposed to the frequency of use.

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Appendix

TABLE 1: VARIABLE DESCRIPTIONS

Variable	Description
Voted	1 for a record in the vote history file for a respondent having voted in the 2014 General Election, 0 for not voted
Any FVAP Resource	1 for any FVAP resource use, 0 for no FVAP resource use (Coded 1 if a respondent marked any of the following survey items: sought voting information from FVAP, used FVAP.gov for voting assistance, used FVAP staff support for voting assistance, used the FVAP online assistant for voting assistance, visited FVAP.gov in preparation for the 2014 election or received information about voting procedures from FVAP.gov)
Experience	1 for has a record of voting once or more in vote history since first eligible election after moving overseas, 0 for not
Country Mobility	Log of the number of years located at a different address within the same overseas country
Overseas Mobility	1 for has been located in current country fewer years than has been located overseas, 0 for not
Motivated	1 for has a record of returning ballot once or more in vote history before moving overseas, 0 for not
Age	Continuous age of respondent on November 4, 2014
Male	1 for male, 0 for female
Race/Ethnicity	1 for white non-Hispanic, 0 for non-white
Education	1 for no college education; 2 for some college or associate's degree; 3 for bachelor's degree in college; 4 for MA/PhD/professional degree^{o}
Marital Status	1 for married^{o}; 2 for divorce, separated or widowed; 3 for never married
Survey Method	1 for web survey, 0 for paper survey
State Region	1 for New England; 2 for Mid Atlantic^{o}; 3 for Midwest; 4 for West North Central; 5 for South Atlantic; 6 for East South Central; 7 for West South Central; 8 for Mountain; 9 for Pacific
State Governor Election	0 for no State governor election^{o}, 1 for non-competitive State governor election (> 5 percent margin of victory); 2 for competitive State governor election (< or = 5 percent margin of victory) in 2014 midterm elections
State Senator Election	0 for no senator election^{o}, 1 for non-competitive senator election (> 5 percent margin of victory), 2 for competitive senator election (< or = 5 percent margin of victory) in 2014 midterm elections
World Region	1 for Africa; 2 for East Asia and Pacific; 3 for Europe and Eurasia^{o}; 4 for Near East; 5 for South and Central Asia; 6 for Western Hemisphere
Country Eligible Population	Log of estimated eligible overseas voter population by country (FVAP's 2016 OCPA)
Country GDP	Log of the average GDP from 2011 to 2014 by country (World Bank)
Country Internet Use	Percent of individuals in a country that use the internet, 2013 (World Bank)
Country Mobile Use	Number of cell phone subscriptions per capita by country, 2013 (World Bank)

Note: ^{o} Omitted category.

TABLE 2: EXPERIENCED BALLOT REQUESTER CORRELATES

Variables		Experience	
		Coef.	S. E.
Mobility	Country	0.262	(0.071)***
	Overseas	0.799	(0.153)***
Motivation		-0.688	(0.087)***
Age	Age	0.078	(0.020)***
	Age Squared	-0.001	(0.000)***
Male		-0.182	(0.126)
White		0.257	(0.114)**
Education	No College	-0.174	(0.173)
	Some College	-0.669	(0.100)***
	Bachelor's Degree	-0.225	(0.128)*
Marital Status	Divorced or Widow	-0.051	(0.129)
	Never Married	-0.010	(0.092)
Method		0.142	(0.147)
State Governor Election	Non-Competitive	-0.292	(0.382)
	Competitive	-0.104	(0.229)
State Senate Election	Non-Competitive	0.059	(0.206)
	Competitive	0.233	(0.325)
Country Eligible Population		0.071	(0.032)**
Country GDP		0.170	(0.074)**
Country Internet Use		0.031	(0.352)
Country Mobile Use		-0.353	(0.153)**
Constant		-1.757	(0.907)*
R2		0.149	
N		6982	

Note: The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator for whether the respondent had voted from overseas at least once since their first eligible election in their vote history. The model was estimated using logit regression. State and world region were controlled for but not displayed. Observations are weighted to reflect the study design and mitigate the risk of various sources of survey error. Standard errors are clustered by country. *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01.

TABLE 3: ANY FVAP RESOURCE USE CORRELATES

Variables		FVAP Resource Use	
		Coef.	S. E.
Experience		-0.172	(0.149)
Mobility	Country	-0.001	(0.050)
	Overseas	0.263	(0.078)***
Motivation		0.017	(0.099)
Age	Age	0.018	(0.011)*
	Age Squared	0.000	(0.000)***
Male		0.011	(0.060)
White		-0.228	(0.090)**
Education	No College	-0.006	(0.155)
	Some College	0.085	(0.140)
	Bachelor's Degree	-0.039	(0.064)
Marital Status	Divorced or Widow	0.090	(0.121)
	Never Married	-0.029	(0.102)
Method		0.037	(0.162)
State Governor Election	Non-Competitive	-0.442	(0.377)
	Competitive	-0.790	(0.213)***
State Senate Election	Non-Competitive	-0.153	(0.190)
	Competitive	0.021	(0.274)
Country Eligible Population		-0.122	(0.035)***
Country GDP		-0.054	(0.111)
Country Internet Use		0.227	(0.438)
Country Mobile Use		-0.069	(0.123)
Constant		-0.435	(1.200)
R2		0.039	
N		6970	

Note: The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator for whether the respondent used any FVAP resource. The model was estimated using logit regression. State and world region were controlled for but not displayed. Observations are weighted to reflect the study design and mitigate the risk of various sources of survey error. Standard errors are clustered by country. *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01.

TABLE 4: VOTING MODEL, ANY FVAP RESOURCE USE

Variables		Voted	
		Coef.	S. E.
Any FVAP Resource		0.525	(0.116)***
Experience		0.610	(0.088)***
Any FVAP Resource * Experience		-0.092	(0.149)
Motivation		0.416	(0.066)***
Mobility	Country	-0.019	(0.029)
	Overseas	-0.028	(0.081)
Age	Age	0.026	(0.014)*
	Age Squared	0.000	(0.000)
Male		0.103	(0.048)**
White		0.329	(0.067)***
Education	No College	-0.329	(0.151)**
	Some College	-0.136	(0.064)**
	Bachelor's Degree	-0.095	(0.079)
Marital Status	Divorced or Widow	-0.069	(0.061)
	Never Married	0.277	(0.091)***
Method		0.278	(0.103)***
State Governor Election	Non-Competitive	0.214	(0.320)
	Competitive	-0.791	(0.265)***
State Senate Election	Non-Competitive	0.964	(0.147)***
	Competitive	1.020	(0.227)***
Country Eligible Population		0.034	(0.026)
Country GDP		-0.011	(0.071)
Country Internet Use		0.624	(0.344)*
Country Mobile Use		-0.086	(0.100)
Constant		-3.692	(0.896)***
R2		0.111	
N		6808	

Note: The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator for if there was a record in the vote history data for a respondent having voted in the 2014 election. The model was estimated using logit regression. OLS models and logit models, omitting or controlling for automatic ballot States, showed similar results. State and world region were controlled for but not displayed. Observations are weighted to reflect the study design and mitigate the risk of various sources of survey error. Standard errors are clustered by country. *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01.

TABLE 5: VOTING MODEL, FVAP.GOV USE

Variables		Voted	
		Coef.	S. E.
FVAP.gov Use		0.765	(0.138)***
FVAP.gov DK		0.345	(0.149)**
Experience		0.627	(0.077)***
FVAP.gov Use * Experience		-0.223	(0.177)
FVAP.gov DK * Experience		0.041	(0.171)
Motivation		0.413	(0.064)***
Mobility	Country	-0.017	(0.030)
	Overseas	-0.031	(0.084)
Age	Age	0.026	(0.014)*
	Age Squared	0.000	(0.000)
Male		0.088	(0.051)*
White		0.328	(0.067)***
Education	No College	-0.330	(0.145)**
	Some College	-0.133	(0.063)**
	Bachelor's Degree	-0.087	(0.078)
Marital Status	Divorced or Widow	-0.071	(0.059)
	Never Married	0.255	(0.093)***
Method		0.243	(0.106)**
State Governor Election	Non-Competitive	0.210	(0.323)
	Competitive	-0.783	(0.270)***
State Senate Election	Non-Competitive	0.939	(0.152)***
	Competitive	1.014	(0.230)***
Country Eligible Population		0.035	(0.027)
Country GDP		-0.012	(0.072)
Country Internet Use		0.645	(0.361)*
Country Mobile Use		-0.065	(0.103)
Constant		-3.677	(0.915)***
R2		0.113	
N		6808	

Note: The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator for if there was a record in the vote history data for a respondent having voted in the 2014 election. The model was estimated using logit regression. OLS models and logit models, omitting or controlling for automatic ballot States, showed similar results. DK is a dummy variable for those who answered they don't know if they visited the website and is expected to include users and nonusers. State and world region were controlled for but not displayed. Observations are weighted to reflect the study design and mitigate the risk of various sources of survey error. Standard errors are clustered by country. *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01.

TABLE 6: VOTING MODEL, FVAP ONLINE ASSISTANT USE

Variables		Voted	
		Coef.	S. E.
FVAP Online Assistant Use		0.011	(0.365)
Experience		0.531	(0.085)***
FVAP Online Assistant Use * Experience		0.390	(0.422)
Motivation		0.414	(0.065)***
Mobility	Country	-0.018	(0.030)
	Overseas	-0.007	(0.081)
Age	Age	0.025	(0.014)*
	Age Squared	0.000	(0.000)
Male		0.102	(0.048)**
White		0.312	(0.065)***
Education	No College	-0.319	(0.149)**
	Some College	-0.130	(0.060)**
	Bachelor's Degree	-0.096	(0.081)
Marital Status	Divorced or Widow	-0.064	(0.061)
	Never Married	0.269	(0.092)***
Method		0.273	(0.099)***
State Governor Election	Non-Competitive	0.191	(0.335)
	Competitive	-0.834	(0.280)***
State Senate Election	Non-Competitive	0.944	(0.143)***
	Competitive	1.012	(0.234)***
Country Eligible Population		0.022	(0.026)
Country GDP		-0.017	(0.079)
Country Internet Use		0.641	(0.358)*
Country Mobile Use		-0.096	(0.103)
Constant		-3.395	(0.977)***
R2		0.106	
N		6808	

Note: The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator for if there was a record in the vote history data for a respondent having voted in the 2014 election. The model was estimated using logit regression. OLS models and logit models, omitting or controlling for automatic ballot States, showed similar results. State and world region were controlled for but not displayed. Observations are to reflect the study design and mitigate the risk of various sources of survey error. Standard errors are clustered by country. *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01.

TABLE 7: PERCENT INEXPERIENCED AND ANY FVAP RESOURCE USERS, TOP 10 ELIGIBLE *UOCAVA* COUNTRIES

Country	Eligible Population	Inexperienced Ballot Requesters	FVAP Resource Users
Canada	660,935	20%	25%
United Kingdom	306,600	23%	23%
France	156,899	22%	32%
Israel	133,580	39%	22%
Japan	110,933	29%	27%
Australia	103,385	22%	33%
Germany	89,528	26%	34%
Costa Rica	79,469	19%	24%
Switzerland	68,322	24%	24%
Mexico	64,852	35%	29%
World	**2,563,226**	**29%**	**29%**

Note: Eligible population comes from estimates generated by country in the analysis conducted in FVAP's (2016) *Overseas Citizen Population Analysis*. Using 2014 OCPS data, inexperienced ballot requesters is the weighted percentage by country of inexperience, defined as whether the respondent had requested a ballot from overseas at least once since their first eligible election in their vote history. FVAP resource users is the weighted percentage by country of any FVAP use, defined as whether the respondent sought voting information from FVAP, used FVAP.gov for voting assistance, used FVAP staff support for voting assistance, used the FVAP online assistant for voting assistance, visited FVAP.gov in preparation for the 2014 election or received information about voting procedures from FVAP.gov.

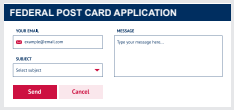
FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FVAP RESOURCE USE AND OVERSEAS VOTING

RESOURCE USE

29% Any FVAP Resource

17% FVAP.gov



5% Online Assistant

1% Staff Support

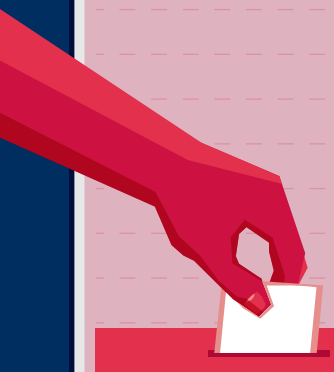
USERS OF FVAP RESOURCES

YOUNGER
LESS EDUCATED

25% 75%

OLDER
MORE EDUCATED

INEXPERIENCED VOTERS



FVAP Non-User
19% VOTING RATE

FVAP User
28% VOTING RATE

EXPERIENCED VOTERS

FVAP Non-User
29% VOTING RATE

FVAP User
38% VOTING RATE

INEXPERIENCED VOTERS BENEFITTED MORE FROM THE USE OF FVAP RESOURCES

THEIR VOTING RATE INCREASED BY NEARLY 50%

Federal Voting Assistance Program. (2016). FVAP Resource Use and Experience Among Overseas Citizens in the 2014 Election