Overseas Vote Foundation:

What we are doing to Improve the UOCAVA Voting Process

Testimony of Overseas Vote Foundation to:

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration
April 15, 2008

Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Ehlers, committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify today at this important hearing on "Military and Overseas Voting: Problems and Progress in Ensuring the Vote."

My name is Susan Dzieduszycka-Suinat and I am President & CEO of Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF), a nonpartisan nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charity organization founded in 2005, dedicated to serving the voter registration needs of uniformed and overseas American citizens who wish to participate in federal elections. We do this primarily by developing and providing online access to innovative voter registration tools and services for voters and election officials.

After co-founding OVF in 2005, I have been able to apply my expertise and years of experience in software development and marketing to visualize and manage the design, development, implementation and communications programs for online registration systems for Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters.

I will now proceed to give you a summarized review of: 1) The services OVF provides for voters; 2) OVF's hosted-system program for the states; 3) 2008 results to date; 4) Recent developments which may affect 2008 UOCAVA voter participation; 5) Key areas of concern.

Overseas Vote Foundation: Core Activities
- Develop and provide online tools and services that simplify the overseas and military absentee voter registration process
- Provide hosted-systems services and support to states and other organizations for their own overseas and military voter services programs
- Provide support to voters through an ongoing communications and outreach programs
- Research and surveys of U.S. citizens and local election officials regarding the overseas and military voter registration and absentee ballot process.

Online Voter Services

Our website, www.overseasvotefoundation.org, provides online, world-wide access to a suite of six web-applications which solve practical issues of UOCAVA voter registration/ballot request and blank ballot delivery. We provide critical information resources to support the UOCAVA voter in their registration and voting process. This includes complete local election official contact data for all jurisdictions across the U.S., state-specific deadline and voting materials transmission options, and both automated and personalized voter help desk services.

OVF's voter services are user-friendly while they maintain full compliance to the state-specific rules and regulations mapped out in the federal Voting Assistance Guide.

In October 2007, OVF unveiled the current redesigned, re-engineered website offering a completely revamped suite of integrated voter services well in time to impact overseas and uniformed services voter participation in the 2008 primaries. OVF's website re-engineering has been made possible through the generous support of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

OVF's experience and research contributed to a site design that caters to overseas and military voters' unique needs.

Description of Primary Services

OVF Registration and Absentee Voter Application (RAVA):

- Ensures that voters complete and generate their official voter registration/ballot request form confidently, accurately and without omissions
- Prompts the voter for information necessary to register to vote in his/her home state in accordance with each state's unique state regulations
- Error-checks during the process to ensure that the voter does not forget any required information
- Generates an official form in PDF format and provides the voter with the correct election office address for mailing and a complete letter of instructions pre-empting common UOCAVA voter questions
- Eliminates the need to individually research unique state regulations and mailing instructions

OVF Election Official Directory (EOD):

- Most comprehensive and up-to-date directory of US election officials available
- Contains contact data including physical and mailing addresses, phone, fax, email and website URLs for all local election jurisdictions across the US
- Licensed by the National Association of Secretaries of State; linked to by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, the EOD has become the main contact database resource both overseas and domestically
- Google will feed data directly from OVF's EOD to support their 2008election initiatives
- FedEx will use the OVF EOD as the "gold copy" for correct election office physical addresses for their 2008 ballot delivery initiative, (see below for further information)

OVF Voter Help Desk (VHD) with KnowledgeBase facilities:

- Provides fast and friendly online voter support worldwide
- Integrated support "KnowledgeBase" pro-actively provides voters with instantaneous answers which apply work across all states and territories
- Sends timely, personalized responses to questions regarding voter registration requirements and form processing issues, as well as eligibility and balloting questions

OVF State-specific Voter Information Directory:

- Presents state-by-state election dates and deadlines
- Simplifies the presentation of state-specific voting information and instructions that apply to the transmission of UOCAVA voting information
- Provides State-level contact information and links to Local-level contact data

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB):

- Online blank ballot generation for registered UOCAVA voters whose ballots are late
- Prompts the voter for information necessary to properly complete the FWAB coversheet form in his/her home state in accordance with each state's unique state regulations
- Error-checks during the process to ensure that the voter does not forget any required information
- Generates an official form in PDF format and provides the voter with the correct election office address for mailing and a complete letter of instructions for completing the ballot and pre-empting common UOCAVA voter questions
- Makes the best solution to late ballots accessible to voters around the world

My Voter Account (MVA):

- Optional service that allows the voter to open a data account and maintain his/her voter information on file for re-use
- As a security measure, the system does not save voter identification numbers, nor complete birthdates
- Facilitates faster notification to election officials in the event of UOCAVA voter address changes, annual re-filing, registration corrections, and/or printing a blank write-in ballot

Security

Although OVF does not keep confidential information, such as ID numbers, credit card numbers, or complete birthdates, in 2007 the organization has nevertheless chosen to upgrade its data security strategy. Integral to designing and meeting OVF's new privacy and security objectives is the secure, managed hosting provider, ServerVault, based in Dulles, Virginia.

ServerVault Corp. provides customized, highly secure, fully managed infrastructure solutions for sensitive and critical federal government and commercial organization applications. ServerVault caters to organizations that place a high priority on the security and the availability of their critical applications, particularly those that must comply with federal standards for information security management and data management. The Department of Defense and the Defense Intelligence Agency are two notable clients of ServerVault's substantial government account base.

OVF's State Hosted Systems (SHS) Licensing Program

State level implementation of UOCAVA is the critical factor in the program's success. Improving UOCAVA voting program implementation must be done hand-in-hand with the states. All states have the will, but many states do not have the resources required to manage the complicated UOVACA voting program for a slice of their voting population.

OVF's State Hosted Systems (SHS) program enables states and other organizations to provide state-of-the-art, interactive voter registration services to their voters as well. The entire OVF software suite is offered to states for with their own customized design. Voters experience the services as being provided by the state, while OVF is offloading the design, development, support, hosting and reporting overhead. The state can then provide highly improved quality voter services to UOCAVA voters at a fraction of the cost that they would need to develop such a system on their own, saving taxpayer money, and ensuring overseas and military voters improved access.

The SHS Program has been made possible through the generous support of the JEHT Foundation. They have supported OVF to develop the technical infrastructure required for this state-oriented solution. JEHT Foundation also subsidizes the start-up fees for each state participating in the SHS program.

With an SHS, each state runs a Voter Help Desk to manage UOCAVA voter support across their state. This reduces the training and support burden on local election officials. A Reporting Dashboard allows for real-time data analysis and inquiries regarding voter registrations occurring on each state's site.

To date, Alabama, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and West Virginia have signed agreements with OVF to license the OVF's voter services for their own state UOCAVA voter services sites.

The SHS program helps state and local election offices lower the barrier to voter registration by UOCAVA voters by making it easy, fast and complete. Propagating the number of sites that offer the OVF services changes the landscape of overseas voting. It becomes the norm to offer automated registration assistance. The states are instrumental in driving this change as they adopt the SHS concepts. Our goal is that UOCAVA voters will stop using the registration process as an excuse to *not* vote.

Following, an example of the new West Virginia and the new Kentucky voter services sites:

West Virginia Secretary of State
Betty Ireland

Military and Overseas Voter Registration

- Register to Vote
- Voter Help Desk
- Election Official Directory
- My Voter Account
- State Voter Information Directory
- Federal Absentee Write-in Ballot (FWAB)
- Go back to the West Virginia Secretary of State's Website

Provided by Overseas Vote Foundation

Register to Vote Request your Ballot

Overseas and Military voter registration

Continue

Election Official Directory

Find your West Virginia local election official

Continue

Voter Help Desk

Choose your question category:

Question category ▼

Continue

State Voter Information Directory:
Registration Deadlines
Delivery Options for Registrations and Ballots
State Contact Information

My Voter Account
Enter your email address

Log In or Sign Up

Home | Terms Of Use | Privacy & Security Policy | FAQs

Kentucky.gov   KY Agencies | KY Services | Search this site ▼ for Search [Go]

ELECTIONS
KENTUCKY SECRETARY OF STATE
Trey Grayson

Military and Overseas Voter Registration

- Register to Vote
- Voter Help Desk
- Election Official Directory
- My Voter Account
- State Voter Information Directory
- Federal Absentee Write-in Ballot (FWAB)
- Go back to the Kentucky Secretary of State's Website

Provided by Overseas Vote Foundation

Register to Vote Request your Ballot

Overseas and Military voter registration

Continue

Election Official Directory

Find your Kentucky local election official

Continue

Voter Help Desk

Choose your question category:

Question category ▼

Continue

State Voter Information Directory:
Registration Deadlines
Delivery Options for Registrations and Ballots
State Contact Information

My Voter Account
Enter your email address

Log In or Sign Up

Home | Terms Of Use | Privacy & Security Policy | FAQs

Results to Date

2008 Web Presence

OVF has established a strong web presence in 2008, especially leading up to and including the Super Tuesday primary elections in February 2008.

Since the primary season has slowed down, traffic on the site has become more constant, dropping from an average of 10,500 visits to the site daily to around 4,000. Given that primary elections tend to bring out the most energetic voters, it is likely that the 2008 general election will generate traffic on the OVF site that is much higher than the usage seen before Super Tuesday.

> OVF has developed a strong web presence that is providing many individuals with information about the nuances of the process of voting from abroad.

New, First-time Overseas Voters Find OVF
Percent Registrants using the OVF site:
- First Time Voters: 24%
- Previous Domestic Voters: 45%
  (First Time Overseas Voters)
- Combined Total
  "First Time Overseas" Voters: **70%**

Young Voters Gain Ground
- 18 – 29 years old: 30%
- 30 – 44 years old: 37%
- 45 – 59 years old: 23%

Site action tracks closely to election activity and worldwide news coverage
- Total Site Visits thru end of March 2008: 718,000
- Site Visits on Super Tuesday: 45,500
- *Don't report on "hits" (11,650,000 in 2008!) – Must look at "visits"*

Who is visiting?
The total number of visitors to the OVF website has been impressive. However, when we break down these data further, we also see that OVF has developed a strong presence across the world.

The United States is also a key source of visitors. This is due to the Election Official Directory usage.

In January 2008, 14 of the top 25 host names that were the source of OVF traffic were military hosts (hosts with a ".mil" address). Three of these sites are CentCom sites. US military networks are the second largest source of visitors to the OVF website.[1]

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[1] Almost half of all network connections cannot be classified.

Ratios of Overseas Citizens to Uniformed Services using OVF to register/request ballots

- Military Registrants: 13.4% (up from 3%)
- Overseas Citizens, temporarily overseas: 32.3%
- Overseas Citizens, indefinitely overseas: 54.3%

Early data suggest that OVF is generating a positive initial level of interest among uniformed services members across the world and from citizens across the globe, as we enter the 2008 presidential campaign. Overseas citizen visitors and military personnel are spending significant time on the site to register and to see what else it offers.

In addition to the penetration that OVF has among the military, we see that the OVF website generated visits from 20 countries that would be expected to be large sources of overseas voters, including the UK, Canada, Mexico, Germany, Israel, and France.

Geographic Shift
1. Uniformed Services lead; tied w/United Kingdom
2. Canada – typically number one on the chart
3. Germany
4. **Israel** – new in '08 and holding in the top 5
5. **Japan** – new in '08 and holding in the top 5
6. France
7. Australia
8. Switzerland
9. Italy
10. **Mexico** – finally made it into the top 10

* Excluded India, Pakistan and Malaysia

Connection Speed
The typical OVF website visitor has the capability to conduct interactive online transactions because most have a high-speed connection. Given that the speed of almost one-third of connections cannot be classified, we still see that approximately 63% of OVF visitors came in through a DSL, cable, or T1 connection. Only 3.9% had a dial-up connection. If we exclude the connections with an unknown speed, 94 percent of OVF visitors came in through a high-speed connection.

Recent 2008 Developments

1. 2008 Ballot Return Initiative: OVF Alliance with FedEx Express

FedEx Express, the world's largest express transportation company, has announced that they will work together with OVF in 2008 to deliver ballots from voters' countries of residence back to the voting authorities in their home states. Details will be announced in the coming months.

The FedEx ballot return initiative with OVF will be funded by FedEx and will not rely on governmental funding.

This action supports precisely the kind of initiative as mentioned in the Rep. Kevin McCarthy's (R-CA) HR 5673 Military Voting Protection Act.

2. Military Site

On April 3, 2008, OVF announced a new website that will provide user-friendly voter services to uniformed services members and their families: https://military.overseasvotefoundation.org. The new website provides the full complement of automated voter services offered by OVF including voter registration/ballot request, election official directory services, voter help desk, state-specific voter information directory, write-in ballot and My Voter Account services.

This action will provide a fundamental backdrop to OVF's broadening military voter outreach in 2008. Military voters landing on this site will know instantly how to proceed into the registration/ballot request process, find deadline and contact information, or access the Voter Help Desk.

3. Low Bandwidth Option

OVF is very aware that bandwidth can be a very serious issue impacting access for military voters and those in remote areas around the world. To meet the needs of these voters, OVF will be launching a special, minimal-graphic site which uses less bandwidth. This "OVF Lite" site – will be launched in the coming weeks. Voters will have the option to switch to the lower bandwidth site or to go directly there. This action has the effect of increasing voter service accessibility to more UOCAVA voters around the world.

4. OVF Second Annual UOCAVA Summit 2008

OVF recently concluded our 2nd Summit on overseas and military voting. The event marked a turning point for many key stakeholders in the UOCAVA election community as they came together to discuss current issues affecting UOCAVA voter participation, legislative initiatives, and outreach, as well as to debate hot topics such as Internet voting which have emerged as key issues through our post election research. There is great motivation in this stakeholder network to move the issues forward to practical solutions.

We were honored with the attendance and speaking participation of notable federal agencies including the U.S. Election Assistance (USEAC), the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, and the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. It was very unfortunate that the United Airlines flight groundings prevented your Committee staff from speaking as intended at this well-attended conference.

The event brought together federal agencies with overseas citizens and organization leaders, members of the military and their families, students, technologists, innovators, advocates, Secretaries of State, election officials, academics and members of the press. OVF is making strides to bring together this network of voters, supporters and election community members with the goal of tackling specific UOCAVA voting challenges.

Key Concerns 2008

1. Address Known, Practical Issues that Hinder the UOCAVA Program

Much research by OVF and other organizations has now been executed and specific, practical problems in UOCAVA identified. OVF is a non-advocacy, non-lobbying entity and can only provide information to support action by others. We can, however, state the fact that our research show that the lack of uniformity in rules and regulations, coupled with many practical and simple to fix issues are the root of many UOCAVA problems. The facts came through very plainly in OVF's 2006 post election research. Most of these are not costly problems to fix, but they do require time and attention.

2. UOCAVA Ballot Counting and Loss of Voter Confidence

The single greatest motivation for a voter to exercise his/her franchise by registering to vote and casting a ballot is to know that his/her ballot will be counted, and that it could be the deciding vote cast.

No where else is this more pertinent than in the area of overseas and military voting. Since the 2000 election, the margin of victory has narrowed and the difference that votes from overseas can make can often alter results. Due to a historic lack of information regarding the numbers of US citizens (there is no US census overseas) and military abroad, the overseas and military vote remains a profound mystery to many in terms of expected numbers or affiliation.

In September 2007, one year after the 2006 midterm elections, The United States Election Assistance Commission ("USEAC", www.eac.gov), released a report: ***2006 Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) Survey Report*** (http://www.eac.gov/clearinghouse/2006-uniformed-and-overseas-citizens-voting-act-survey-and-conference-materials/).

This report reflects data gathered in compliance with the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) that requires individual states to collect data on how many UOCAVA ballots were sent and received, and instructs the USEAC to aggregate this data in a report to be delivered to Congress.

Findings taken from the report itself:

Numerous States and local jurisdictions are still not consistently collecting information on UOCAVA ballots requested, ballots returned, and, although not mandated by law, the reasons for ballot rejection in a manner appropriate to provide a full and fair accounting of the UOCAVA voting experience.

The data quality was unreliable, incomplete and "replete with improbable information." This was similar to the data collected after the 2004 election. This is a long term data collection problem that goes down to the voting jurisdiction level.

It was reported that 992,034 UOCAVA-related absentee ballots were requested for the 2006 general election. There is no way of knowing how many of these were actually requests for ballots for the 2006 election or were the automatic generation of ballots through the use of the "Federal Post Card Application" form.

States report slightly more than 330,000 UOCAVA ballots were cast or counted, for an estimated eligible turnout rate of approximately 5.5 percent. The second largest categorized reason for rejecting ballots was "other reason" – specifically not tracked, recorded, or reported.

In many cases, States were unable to provide sufficiently detailed information on UOCAVA balloting. For over one-third of the UOCAVA ballots that were cast, as well as counted, it was not possible to determine whether they came from domestic military, overseas military or overseas citizens.

In 14 States, less than 2/3 of the jurisdictions collected the information mandated by UOCAVA. (In a number of these cases, "uncategorized" became a "catch-all" category to describe UOCAVA ballots.)

Domestic military voters who requested ballots had 56.3 percent of their ballots cast or counted. Overseas citizens that requested ballots had 52.6 percent of their ballots cast or counted. On the other hand, overseas military voters had only 47.6 percent of their requested ballots cast or counted.

What significantly drove down the overall rate of counted ballots was the large number of ballots that were uncategorized as to their origin, which represented nearly one-third of all ballots requested. Just 21.8 percent of these uncategorized requested ballots were cast or counted.

As part of its official press release of the survey data (09/24/07), the USEAC recommends the '*redoubling of efforts to collect the HAVA-mandated information*' to improve the voting process for UOCAVA voters.

OVF would like to draw attention to the USEAC recommendation: the collection and study of reliable and comprehensive data on UOCAVA voters is critical to solving the problematic issues surrounding their disenfranchisement. We have experienced this in the execution of our own research program and its effect on our subsequent work.

Our concern is that the fundamental data collection methods at the ground level are not adequate enough to provide an accurate reflection of what truly happens with UOCAVA ballots and that the survey methods/instruments being used are not able to capture the real picture.

We look forward to more qualified attention on the accuracy and validity of the survey and the data collection methods to help rectify this situation, as well as the states and local jurisdictions to receive assistance to better monitor UOCAVA ballot counting according to HAVA requirements.

The greatest risk of not solving this problem is exacerbating a loss of confidence in our electoral system and failing to bring a diverse and eligible voting community into our democratic process. The only way to rebuild voter confidence is to address the explicit shortcomings of our system. The ballot accountability problem identified in the USEAC's report couldn't be a better example of a problem that is crying for urgent attention. Not responding to this obvious need threatens to undermine voter participation.

OVF in 2008

This is a critical year for OVF to deliver on the promise of better access to overseas and military voter services and we now have the technical and growing human-resource infrastructure in place to do so.

OVF will:

- Maintain and grow our ongoing online voter services and outreach
- Increase outreach program support to both military and young voter sectors
- Continue our strong voter communications program
- Continue to build and implement services to support to state-level UOCAVA processes
- Team with the major corporations such as Google and FedEx to bring high-level services to UOCAVA voters
- Further develop the network of UOCAVA stakeholders through post-Summit communications
- Solidify our post-election research program
- Support federal, state and local agencies in their UOCAVA program efforts

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak to the Committee today. I hope you now have a clear idea of what Overseas Vote Foundation is doing – for voters, for states, and for the election community - to improve the UOCAVA voting process.

ADDENDUMS

1. April 4, 2008: Announcement at OVF UOCAVA Summit 2008: FedEx Express to Sponsor Overseas Vote Foundation in Ballot Return Initiative

2. April 3, 2008: Press Release: Overseas Vote Foundation Launches New Military Voter Services Site: https://military.overseasvotefoundation.org

3. January 16, 2008: Press Release: Ohio, Minnesota and Alabama Adopt New Online Solutions to Build 2008 Military and Overseas Absentee Voter Participation Rates

4. OVF 2006 Post Election Survey Results

5. 2006 Post Midterm Local Election Official Survey Report

Announcement at OVF UOCAVA Summit 2008:

FedEx Express to Sponsor Overseas Vote Foundation

in Ballot Return Initiative

MUNICH – April 4, 2008:

"FedEx Express, the world's largest express transportation company, is proud to sponsor Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports more than 6 million U.S. overseas residents. Using their global network, FedEx will deliver ballots from voters' countries of residence back to the voting authorities in their home states.

Information on what overseas residents should do, details about access to FedEx services, and how the return will work will be made available by OVF in the coming months."

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Overseas Vote Foundation Launches New Military Voter Services Site:

https://military.overseasvotefoundation.org

MUNICH – April 3, 2008: Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF) today announced a new website that will provide user-friendly voter services to uniformed services members and their families: https://military.overseasvotefoundation.org. The new website provides the full complement of automated voter services offered by OVF including voter registration/ballot request, election official directory services, voter help desk, state-specific voter information directory, write-in ballot and My Voter Account services.

After identifying which state the voter wants to register in, the system prompts the user for specific information required to register to vote in his/her home state. Built-in error-checking ensures that the form is filled out properly and will be legible for the local election official. The system generates an official PDF form and provides the voter with the county election office address for mailing. The program eliminates the need for individuals to cull through pages of confusing state regulations and mailing instructions and potentially filling out their forms improperly.

"Our military has limited free time that shouldn't be spent wading through 460 pages of cryptic voter registration documentation," said Bob Carey, Senior Fellow, National Defense Committee and member of the OVF Board. "Our service men and women are in a unique position where they are ordered away from home and can't come home to vote. We need to provide them the easiest way to register to vote and request their ballots. OVF's military site gives them instant access to an automated, step-by-step process according to their home state regulations – something they cannot find elsewhere."

OVF has seen military registrations rise from 3 percent to 13 percent of its total registrations in the first few months of 2008 on their general website. Clearly military voters are seeking better service and OVF is responding quickly to this trend according to Susan Dzieduszycka-Suinat, OVF's President and CEO, speaking from the OVF Summit 2008, an overseas and military voting conference taking place in Munich from April 3-4, 2008.

"We want every service member who visits this new site to instantly know they've come to the right place," said Ms. Dzieduszycka-Suinat. "Military voters were the first to vote from overseas starting back in 1942 and in today's vast military theater, they access to new technology and tools instead of what has historically been a cumbersome process, " continued Ms. Dzieduszycka-Suinat.

 "For decades there has been little improvement in the military voting program. With all the advances in technology, our service members, until now, have not had a simplified voting program and assurance that they will receive their ballot," said Carey. "We look at this new site as a powerful first step in the right direction. The challenge now is to get the word out."

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Ohio, Minnesota and Alabama Adopt New Online Solutions to Build 2008 Military and Overseas Absentee Voter Participation Rates
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"Wildcard" Effect of Overseas and Military Vote May Factor in Election Outcomes

WASHINGTON, January 16, 2008 – Aiming to increase U.S. overseas citizen and military voter participation, Ohio, Minnesota and Alabama have launched their own customized, web-based voter registration services. Developed by the nonpartisan Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF), these new State Hosted Systems (SHS) enable states to provide state-of-the-art, interactive voter registration services for a formerly manual and error-prone process at a fraction of the cost, saving taxpayer money, and ensuring overseas and military voters improved access.

"We strongly believe this site, https://ohio.overseasvotefoundation.org, and the tools it provides will enhance our voter services to Ohio citizens abroad. There is no other organization providing these services nationally and we are proud to collaborate with OVF to serve all of our UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act) constituents. We expect to see a jump in participation in 2008," stated Secretary Jennifer Brunner, Ohio.

Mark Ritchie, Minnesota Secretary of State said, "We are looking forward to bringing a vastly increased number of registrations in from overseas citizen and active-duty military voters in 2008. Our new Minnesota voter services, https://minnesota.overseasvotefoundation.org, will facilitate voting for members of the Minnesota National Guard, many of whom will be first-time military voters this year."

"The SHS program is an innovative program in the elections arena for boosting UOCAVA voter participation. We are excited to be at the forefront with this technology and able to offer quality voter services to Alabama's military and overseas voters," stated Beth Chapman, Alabama Secretary of State, who will be launching an Alabama-specific site in the near term.

The JEHT Foundation, www.jehtfoundation.org, has granted both development support for the OVF SHS Program and support to reduce customization and licensing fees for 10 additional states to adopt the SHS program in 2008. "We applaud the states that are helping launch this innovative project and hope our support will encourage new states to join the effort," stated Nicole Gordon, vice president of the JEHT Foundation.

The nonprofit, nonpartisan charitable organization, Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF), was founded in 2005 to assist uniformed and overseas American citizens in registering to vote in federal elections and has become the leader in online voter services for UOCAVA voters. The Pew Charitable Trusts, www.pewtrusts.org, "Make Voting Work" program provided grant support to OVF to develop the 2008 voter services that are now being customized for the states.

Post Election Surveys
OVF conducts post election surveys of both voters and election officials regarding the overseas and military voter registration and absentee ballot process. These help determine problem areas and measure success of improvements and implementation of new applications.

OVF 2006 Post Election Survey Results

OVF's Post Election survey research program provides valuable insight to the election community about issues concerning UOCAVA voting.

The 2006 survey provided timely and feedback and clearly identified issues that deter UOCAVA voter success – many that can be addressed with practical initiatives at the federal, state and local level and together would decidedly impact the voter experience.

The complete report is available at:
https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/initiatives-research

Excerpt from Introduction section:
OVF 2006 Post Election Survey results suggest that some UOCAVA voters continue to encounter voting difficulties. 20% of the voter-respondents to the survey were unable to vote in the 2006 U.S. Midterm election: some because their ballot was late, some because their ballot never arrived. Other reasons cited as preventing successful voting included missed deadlines and the inability to get ballots witnessed or notarized.

2006 Post Midterm Local Election Official Survey Report

8 May 2007

The complete report is available at:
https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/initiatives-research

Executive Summary

Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF) conducted a survey of local election officials (LEOs) after the 2006 election in order to determine how the Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voting process works in their jurisdictions. This survey is the first of its kind for OVF and provides a baseline for understanding where many local election jurisdictions stand with the administration of UOCAVA voting as we enter the 2008 presidential election. The top 5 key findings are:

1. UOCAVA voting is increasing. Half of the participating LEOs indicated increased UOCAVA voting in the 2006 midterms, with more than 6.5% reporting an increase that exceeded 10%.

2. Most LEOs (68.8%) reported that the majority of UOCAVA voters register to vote or request an absentee ballot using the federally-provided voter registration and ballot request form (FPCA). However, in smaller jurisdictions a sizable percentage of voters contact the LEO before leaving to address their UOCAVA voting needs.

3. LEOs find that young overseas voters (18-29) are much more likely to have problems with the UOCAVA voting process than other voters.

4. Ballots and FPCAs are rejected for a variety of reasons. The two most common reasons are: (1) the FPCAs or ballots arrive after the deadline, too late for inclusion in the voting process; and (2) the FPCAs or ballots are incorrect, illegible, or incomplete.

5. LEOs reported that their biggest problem is maintaining current and accurate mailing addresses for UOCAVA voters, especially over two federal election cycles.