

SERVING AND VOTING: OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JUNE 24, 2025

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C O N T E N T S

	Page
OPENING STATEMENTS	
The Honorable Barry Loudermilk, Representative from the State of Georgia ...	1
Prepared statement of Barry Loudermilk	3
Ranking Member Joseph Morelle, Representative from the State of New York	3
Prepared statement of Ranking Member Joseph Morelle	5
WITNESSES	
Dr. Liz Clark, director, Defense Services Support Center	11
Prepared statement of Dr. Liz Clark	13
Scott Wiedmann, director, Federal Voting Assistance Program	22
SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD	
SAVE Act opposition letter	7
Vet Voice Foundation letter	9
Secure Families Initiative statement	30
U.S. Vote Foundation statement	31
Vet Voice Foundation statement	37
QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD	
Scott Wiedmann answers to submitted questions	41

**SERVING AND VOTING:
OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL
VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

June 24, 2025

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:35 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Bryan Steil [chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Steil, Loudermilk, Murphy, Carey, Morelle, Sewell, Torres, and Johnson.

Staff present: Mike Platt, Staff Director; Rachel Collins, General Counsel; Abby Salter, Parliamentarian; Jordan Wilson, Director of Member Services; Kristen Monterroso, Director of Operations; Josh Weber, Counsel; Annemarie Cake, Professional Staff and Deputy Clerk; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Sean Wright, Minority Chief Counsel; Sarah Nasta, Minority Senior Advisor; Nikolas Youngsmith, Minority Elections Counsel; and Owen Reilly, Minority Professional Staff.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK, A U.S.
REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA**

Mr. LOUDERMILK.

[Presiding.] The Committee on House Administration will come to order.

The title of today's hearing is "Serving and Voting: Oversight of the Federal Voting Assistance Program."

I note that a quorum is present and, without objection, the chair may declare a recess at any time.

Also, without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days so Members may submit materials they wish to be included therein.

Thank you, Ranking Member Morelle, Members of the Committee, and our witnesses, for participating in today's hearing.

Before we begin, it is not lost on me, as a veteran of the United States Air Force who did two overseas tours, that while we are here today discussing how we can make it easier for active-duty military to vote, our troops serving overseas are serving our Nation in harm's way on a daily basis.

Now more than ever, it is important that we are doing all we can to support our troops who are putting their lives on the line for this

country. I am thankful for their service and I am praying for their safe return home.

Free, fair, and secure elections are the cornerstone of our democracy, and it is our brave servicemembers that defend that right for all Americans. As the Committee with oversight authority of Federal elections, it is important that we take a look at the laws and procedures in place for our active-duty military voters. More specifically, we will be looking at the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, commonly known as UOCAVA, and the Federal Voting Assistance Program, to provide oversight to determine if improvements are needed.

UOCAVA, which was enacted in 1986, is the only Federal statute that is solely devoted to protecting the access to vote for active-duty military, their family members, and other overseas citizens. UOCAVA has not been subject to significant congressional oversight in over a decade.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program, or FVAP, is responsible for administering daily responsibilities of UOCAVA under the direction of the Secretary of Defense. In other words, the FVAP is responsible for helping our servicemembers vote in their respective State and local jurisdictions.

Both UOCAVA and the FVAP ensure that servicemembers who want to vote have the opportunity to do so. According to the FVAP, approximately 950,000 active-duty military are eligible to vote under UOCAVA. However, not every active-duty servicemember registers to vote.

During the 2022 election, 63 percent of active-duty military voters covered by UOCAVA, both in the United States and abroad, successfully registered to vote. Unfortunately, an even smaller percentage of those who registered actually cast their ballot.

In the 2022 general election, only 26 percent of active-duty military voters covered by UOCAVA cast their ballot for the election. However, in their most recent report to Congress, FVAP highlighted that active-duty military who sought assistance from FVAP were three times more likely to cast their ballot.

In 2022, the FVAP distributed nearly 200,000 pieces of educational and outreach materials to voters at 105 military installations worldwide. Additionally, the FVAP responded to over 12,000 inquiries to its call center.

While FVAP has made strong headway with boosting voter participation amongst UOCAVA voters, there is more that can be done. Every registered American citizen should have the resources they need to participate in our democracy. Our servicemembers who put their lives on the line to defend that same democracy should not be an exception.

I hope today we are able to find ways to increase turnout among active-duty military voters ahead of the 2026 general election.

I thank our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to having a robust conversation with all of you on this critical issue.

Before I close my remarks, I would like to highlight, we will be test piloting a new closed caption technology during today's hearing. This technology was approved by the Subcommittee on Mod-

ernization and Innovation and will soon be available to all House Committees.

I thank our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to our discussion.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes for the purposes of providing an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Loudermilk follows:]

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE BARRY
LOUDERMILK**

Free, fair and secure elections are the cornerstone of our democracy, and it is our brave servicemembers that defend that right for all Americans. As the Committee with oversight authority of Federal elections, it is important that we take a look at the laws and procedures in place for our active-duty military voters.

More specifically, we will be looking at the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, commonly referred to as UOCAVA, and the Federal Voting Assistance Program, to provide oversight and determine if improvements are needed. UOCAVA, which was enacted in 1986, is the only Federal statute that is solely devoted to protecting the access to vote for active-duty military, their family members, and other overseas citizens.

UOCAVA has not been subject to significant congressional oversight in over a decade. The Federal Voting Assistance Program, or FVAP, is responsible for administering daily responsibilities of UOCAVA under the direction of the Secretary of Defense. In other words, the FVAP is responsible for helping our servicemembers vote in their respective State and local jurisdictions. Both UOCAVA and the FVAP ensure that servicemembers who want to vote have the opportunity to do so.

According to the FVAP, approximately 950,000 active-duty military are eligible to vote under UOCAVA. However, not every active-duty servicemember registers to vote. During the 2022 general election, 63% of active-duty military voters covered by UOCAVA, both in the United States and abroad, successfully registered to vote. Unfortunately, an even smaller percentage of those who registered actually cast their ballot. In the 2022 general election, only 26% of active-duty military voters covered by UOCAVA cast their ballot for the election. However, in their most recent report to Congress, FVAP highlighted that active-duty military who sought assistance from FVAP were three times more likely to cast their ballot.

In 2022, the FVAP distributed nearly 200,000 pieces of educational and outreach materials to voters at 105 military installations worldwide. Additionally, the FVAP responded to over 12,000 inquiries to its call center. While the FVAP has made strong headway with boosting voter participation amongst UOCAVA voters, there is more that can be done. Every registered American citizen should have the resources they need to participate in our democracy. Our servicemembers who put their lives on the line to defend that same democracy should not be an exception.

I hope today we are able to find ways to increase turnout among active-duty military voters ahead of the 2026 general election. I thank our witnesses for being here today and I look forward to having a robust conversation with all of you on this critical issue. Before I close my remarks, I would like highlight that we will be test-piloting new closed caption technology during today's hearing. This technology was approved by the Subcommittee on Modernization and Innovation, and will soon be available to all House Committees. I thank our witnesses for being here today and I look forward to our discussion.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH MORELLE, RANKING
MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW YORK**

Mr. MORELLE. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Loudermilk and to Chairman Steil, and thank you certainly to our witnesses for being here today.

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, or UOCAVA, is a critical component of our efforts to make sure every American, no matter where they live, has an opportunity to vote.

The law provides protections for millions of voters, such as requiring States to send ballots to voters at least 45 days ahead of

Federal elections, and the availability of a Federal write-in absentee ballot, a backup ballot, essentially, that allows overseas and military voters to still cast a ballot in Federal elections if their ballot does not arrive in time.

While UOCAVA is a good start, there is work to be done. According to the Pentagon, in 2022—and some of the statistics my colleague just cited, but I think they bear repeating—15 percent of military voters reported that they either did not receive the ballot in time or the ballot never arrived. The voter participation rate for servicemembers was 26 percent, well, well below national averages. Additionally, the overall voting rate for overseas citizens in 2022 was an estimated 3.4 percent due, in part, to either real or perceived obstacles to casting a ballot from overseas.

At an April hearing, we heard testimony about servicemembers and their spouses never receiving their ballots, others paying out of pocket for a courier service to return their ballot from abroad when they could not access the mail system, and families stationed in Japan whose mail routinely takes 6 to 8 weeks to arrive.

In addition, I spent time, along with Chairman Steil, in both Japan and in Korea, where Korea we met with members of the United States Army about the challenges they faced in receiving ballots.

We could and we should be working in a bipartisan way to improve access to the ballot for military and overseas voters. Instead, what we have had over the last couple of years is my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have advanced policies that severely hinder ballot access and would disenfranchise servicemembers, their families, and millions of other overseas voters.

The SAVE Act and the President's illegal anti-voting executive order would fundamentally disrupt American elections and severely impact the ability of military and overseas voters to vote. For instance, their agenda, their bills, and the executive order would end mail and online voter registration. Their plan also requires voters to register in person at their local elections office, something common sense tells you many military and overseas voters cannot do. If you are stationed in Japan, it is going to make it really difficult for you to register at your local Board of Elections.

House Republicans passed the SAVE Act despite overseas voters asking them not to and despite the fact that we repeatedly on this side of the aisle cautioned them that doing that would make it much, much more difficult, almost impossible, for military personnel to register to vote.

In April, I wanted to invite a witness, a military spouse currently stationed overseas, who could have given voice to the experience of overseas voters and whose testimony we could have easily facilitated. Unfortunately, House Republicans did not want to hear from her and they denied the request.

I am grateful to the witnesses here today. Thank you for your service to the country and to those who seek to vote from abroad.

I had hoped we would also hear from voters these laws impact. Pavan Parikh is the Clerk of Courts in Hamilton County, Ohio. He also served on the Ohio Ballot Board. He is also a JAG officer in the United States Army Reserve who has served overseas, a local

official serving his community and the elections process who has served his country in uniform.

He would have made a great witness, would have added to the witnesses we have, which I am grateful for. Again, my colleagues denied our request to have him appear at this hearing. I hope the Committee can hear from him and others like him very soon. I think they have something to add and their perspective would be welcome.

In over 2 years of being in the majority, this is the first hearing held by my friends focusing on military and overseas voting. The VOTES Act, championed by Elections Subcommittee Chair Laurel Lee and Congressman Maxwell Frost, is a bipartisan bill which would actually increase military voter access, and we should move that bill forward. As I said in April, Democrats would happily waive this Committee's notice requirements to call the VOTES Act up right now to send it once again to the full House.

We have put forward numerous policies that would increase ballot access and, as always the case, there is never any proof to things like what the President has said about voting from abroad and overseas in the last election, because there is never any proof to anything he says about the difficulties in doing it.

Let us focus on ways to improve access. I think we are happy to work in a bipartisan way to expand access to people and we will advance legislation to help them.

I want to thank the chair. I look forward to—and I would like to—before I yield back, Mr. Chair, I would ask unanimous consent to insert into the record a letter from U.S. Vote Foundation, Secure Families Initiative, Blue Star Families, the Association of Americans Resident Overseas, the American Citizens Abroad, and the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, as well as a letter from the Vet Voice Foundation, urging opposition to the SAVE Act and outlining ways in which it would create barriers to the ballot box for overseas voters.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Ranking Member Morelle follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION JOSEPH MORELLE

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, or UOCAVA, is a critical component of our efforts to make sure every American, no matter where they live, has an opportunity to vote. The law provides protections for millions of voters, such as requiring States send ballots to voters at least 45 days ahead of Federal elections, and the availability of a Federal write-in absentee ballot, a backup ballot, essentially, that allows overseas and military voters to still cast a ballot in Federal elections if their ballot does not arrive in time.

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Korea we met with members of the United States Army about the challenges they faced in receiving ballots.

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[The Morelle letters follow:]



April 10, 2025

Re: Oppose the SAVE Act, H.R. 22 / S. 128

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the millions of American citizens living overseas, including tens of thousands of service members, their spouses, and family members, we strongly urge you to oppose the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, H.R. 22 / S. 128.

The SAVE Act would effectively end mail voter registration; instead of simply mailing a form, most Americans would have to present a birth certificate or passport *in person* to a local election official every single time they register or re-register to vote. The SAVE Act would also upend or eliminate online voter registration.

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986 protects the rights of military service members and their eligible family members and other American citizens living abroad to vote in our elections. For nearly 40 years, UOCAVA has required states and territories to allow eligible voters to register and request an absentee ballot using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), which they submit by mail or, in some states, by fax or email, to their local election offices. In some states, Americans who live overseas can also register to vote by using their state's mail registration form or online registration portal.

Millions of American civilians and uniformed service members abroad have used these registration methods for decades. For example, in the two years ending with the 2020 elections, more than 760,000 applicants submitted a Federal Post Card Application to register to vote.¹ And in the two years ending with the 2022 midterms, more than 300,000 applicants submitted a Federal Post Card Application.²

¹ U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*, (August 2021) at 193,

https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf.

² U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report*, (June 2023) at 215, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/2022_EAVS_Report_508c.pdf.

These registrations would likely become impossible under the SAVE Act. It would reverse crucial voting access gains that have been won by generations of Americans, including thousands of service members of color.

We are proud to represent the United States, both formally and informally, abroad. Americans living overseas, including U.S. service members and their families, are citizens fiercely committed to American democracy. Yet the SAVE Act does not make possible, or even account for, our participation in American elections.

Instead of making it easier for Americans to make their voices heard, or strengthening the security of our elections, the SAVE Act would decimate our members' ability to register and vote.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose the SAVE Act.

Best regards,

U.S. Vote Foundation

Blue Star Families

Association of Americans Resident Overseas

American Citizens Abroad

Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas

Secure Families Initiative



March 28, 2025

Dear Representative,

On behalf of Vet Voice Foundation, a nonpartisan organization of nearly 2 million veterans and military families nationwide, I write to express grave concerns regarding the SAVE Act, which would create severe and unnecessary barriers to voting for military personnel, overseas citizens, and millions of other eligible voters.

As a Marine Corps veteran and former Voting Assistance Officer, I know firsthand the importance of ensuring that servicemembers can exercise their fundamental right to vote, even when stationed in remote and challenging environments.

The SAVE Act would impose significant burdens on military and overseas voters by requiring in-person proof of citizenship at a government office in the United States when registering or updating voter registration. This requirement is simply unworkable for servicemembers deployed overseas and would effectively disenfranchise those who have sworn to defend our nation.

Even for military personnel stationed stateside, the bill makes it unnecessarily difficult to register. It fails to recognize military IDs as valid proof of citizenship unless accompanied by additional service records, and it entirely excludes military voters born abroad—many of whom are the children of U.S. service members. This is an unacceptable barrier for those who serve our country.

Beyond the military community, the SAVE Act would make voter registration significantly harder for all Americans by requiring specific documentation—such as a birth certificate or passport—that many eligible voters do not readily have. Millions of Americans, particularly married women, do not have birth certificates that reflect their current legal names, and millions more do not have passports. Additionally, the bill mandates frequent and rushed voter roll purges based on unreliable data, which could result in servicemembers and other voters being wrongfully removed without timely notification, jeopardizing their ability to cast a ballot.

The SAVE Act also undermines state-led efforts to improve access to voter registration by effectively banning or restricting widely used and secure methods such as automatic voter registration, online registration, and mail-in registration. These systems have been instrumental in ensuring voter participation while maintaining election security. Furthermore, the bill places election officials at risk of severe criminal penalties for inadvertent registration errors, discouraging qualified public servants from administering elections effectively.

I urge you to oppose the SAVE Act and any other legislation that creates unnecessary barriers to the ballot box. Instead, I encourage you to come together to advance commonsense, bipartisan policies to protect election integrity while ensuring that every eligible American, especially those serving in uniform, can exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Vet Voice stands ready to support you in these efforts.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janessa Goldbeck', with a stylized, flowing script.

Janessa Goldbeck
Marine Corps Veteran
CEO, Vet Voice Foundation

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you. I yield back, sir.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Without objection, all Members' opening statements will be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Committee clerk by 5 p.m. today.

Today we will have one witness panel. Both witnesses are from the Department of Defense. First, Dr. Liz Clark, director of Defense Services Support Center, who has provided testimony and will give an opening statement. Next, we have Scott Wiedmann, director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program, who is here as a subject matter expert.

We appreciate you both being here with us today and look forward to your testimony.

Dr. Clark, we have read your written statement and it will appear in the full hearing record. I now recognize you for 5 minutes for the purpose of giving an opening statement.

STATEMENTS OF DR. LIZ CLARK, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SERVICES SUPPORT CENTER; AND SCOTT WIEDMANN, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF DR. LIZ CLARK

Ms. CLARK. Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department's implementation of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, or UOCAVA. This vital law ensures that our servicemembers, 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. The Department takes this responsibility seriously.

With me today I have Mr. J. Scott Wiedmann, the Federal Voting Assistance Program, or FVAP, director. Mr. Wiedmann has been with FVAP for over 32 years. FVAP is the mainstay of our efforts to implement UOCAVA and prescribes the two standard absentee voting forms allowing voters to communicate directly with their election officials to request, receive, and submit their ballots. We also work closely with State and local election officials who administer elections to ensure they understand their responsibilities under UOCAVA.

Our focus is on ensuring that UOCAVA voters are informed, educated, and able to successfully vote from anywhere in the world. To do so, we rely on a network of Voting Assistance Officers and the military services and the Department of State to help deliver that assistance.

In the lead-up to the 2024 election, we trained nearly 3,000 Voting Assistance Officers worldwide. They achieved their goals by educating voters at the local level and ensuring voters are aware of the FVAP.gov website, which provides clear, timely, State-specific and accessible voting information.

In 2024, there were nearly 6 million hits on the FVAP.gov website, and more than 600,000 votes used a State-specific Federal postcard application tool to assist them in completing the form before printing, signing, and sending to their State of legal voting residence.

An online completion assistance tool is also available for the Federal write-in absentee ballot, which serves as a backup ballot for voters who have not received their requested State ballot in a timely manner.

There is extensive command support from the military services to increase awareness and messaging regarding absentee voting. Annually, installations support three voting emphasis weeks: Armed Forces Voters Week around Independence Day, Military Spouse Voters Week in early August, and Absentee Voting Week in late September.

These efforts extend information to family members on both domestic and overseas installations through displays, physical and electronic banners, and voter registration drives.

Additionally, the military services provide voter registration and absentee ballot request assistance during each election cycle in high-traffic areas, such as at Military and Family Readiness Centers, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Facilities, medical facilities, commissaries and exchanges.

To enhance absentee voting awareness directly to the voters, we use targeted communication strategies on social media and through trusted stakeholder organizations. For example, in 2024, we had more than 340 million digital ads displayed, 35 million video views, and over 7 million organic social media content appearances.

The FVAP staff works directly with officials at the State and local level to ensure FVAP materials have accurate and up-to-date election dates, ballot deadlines, and election office contact information.

We brief national and State election official organizations to ensure they understand their key responsibilities under UOCAVA, including the 45-day ballot transmission and electronic blank ballot delivery options, to ensure individuals have time to submit their ballot and to notify voters if their application was denied.

We also confirm with election officials that they understand the unique aspects specific to UOCAVA voters and that they, not FVAP, make the final determinations on voters satisfying residency requirements, and that a voter's last address in the United States can be used for voting purposes while overseas.

FVAP also provides ballot mailing envelope templates for use by election officials, which helps ensure election materials sent to UOCAVA voters are postage-free.

In addition, we actively work to improve UOCAVA absentee voting processes through innovation. Congressional funding has allowed us to provide grants to State and localities to explore best practices, such as improving the electronic blank ballot transmission and the use of digital signature verification.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I thank you, Ranking Member Morelle, and the Members of this Committee for your outstanding and continuing support of those who vote under UOCAVA protections, and for the men and women who proudly wear the uniform in defense of our great Nation.

We are truly honored to be with you today, and we look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Clark follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. LIZ CLARK

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE

Statement of
Dr. Liz Clark
Acting Director, Defense Support Services Center
before the
Committee on House Administration

“Serving and Voting: Oversight of the Federal Voting Assistance Program”

June 24, 2025

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE

Chairman Steil, ranking member Morelle, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department's implementation of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). This law ensures military members, their eligible family members, and overseas U.S. citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so – from anywhere in the world in elections for federal offices.

The Department's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) carries out the federal responsibilities of the Act as delegated by the Secretary of Defense, who is the Presidential Designee. As mandated by the Act, FVAP prescribes two uniform absentee voting forms for use by UOCAVA voters. The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) form is used for voter registration and absentee ballot request; and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) form is used by voters as an emergency "back-up" ballot in cases where their requested state ballot does not arrive promptly. The FVAP reviews these forms each election cycle to ensure they are usable and understandable to voters as well as acceptable for processing by the 55 states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

In its administration of UOCAVA, FVAP works cooperatively with state and local election officials to ensure they understand their responsibilities in carrying out its provisions. The absentee voting process for UOCAVA citizens involves several steps. The citizen registers to vote and requests an absentee ballot from his or her local election official using the FPCA. Upon receipt of the completed FPCA, the local election official determines the citizen's legal voting residence based on the information provided. At least 45 days prior to elections for federal office, the local election official provides a state absentee ballot to the citizen either by mail or electronically. The citizen votes the ballot and sends it back to his or her local election

official as provided by state law. These steps traditionally are accomplished through the United States Postal Service, the Military Postal Service Agency, U.S. embassy and consulate pouch service, and foreign postal systems with many states allowing other transmittal methods for UOCAVA absentee voting materials.

The Department devotes considerable effort to ensure that UOCAVA citizens are properly informed and educated about the process of absentee voting. First is the Voting Assistance Guide and the FVAP.gov website, both of which provide voters state-by-state instructions for completion of the forms. Secondly, education includes formal training of military and Department of State Voting Assistance Officers, providing information to state and local election officials, and ensuring that UOCAVA citizens understand their right to vote and can do so successfully from anywhere in the world.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program website (www.fvap.gov) is a critical asset to uniformed Service members, their voting age family members, and U.S. citizens overseas, providing remote access to voting information directly on their device with mobile visits in 2024 outweighing desktop visits 56% to 43%. FVAP.gov received almost six million hits in 2024 through direct traffic, organic searches, paid media, social media, referrals, and emails. Over 600,000 users completed the online FPCA completion tool with approximately 75,000 completing the online FWAB completion tool.

FVAP staff conduct Voting Assistance Officer hands-on training so they understand their mission and can successfully perform their duties. For the 2024 election cycle, FVAP staff members trained nearly 3,000 voting officers through 161 workshops conducted worldwide. This included 94 workshops that were conducted on-site at military installations around the world for Voting Assistance Officers. Additionally, 67 workshops were conducted at the

Department of State installations for State Department Voting Assistance Officers and for civilian members of U.S. citizen organizations who assist others with the absentee voting process. These include sessions held at the Department of State Foreign Service Institute in Arlington.

For Voting Assistance Officers who are unable to attend an in-person workshop, virtual and online options are available to receive certified training. Voting Assistance Officers may complete the online training module at FVAP.gov or attend an in-person installation or regional session held by the military service. In addition to the in-person and on-line training opportunities, the FVAP website provides Voting Assistance Officers with all the necessary tools and resources they require to carry out their responsibilities. The DoD Inspector General performs an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the Department and Service voting assistance programs and found that during 2024 the Services complied with and were effective in meeting the requirements of UOCAVA and DoDI 1000.04, Federal Voting Assistance Program.

The FVAP.gov website also provides specific information for local election officials. As state and local election officials are the individuals who administer U.S. elections, they are key allies in facilitating absentee voting for military members, their families, and U.S. citizens residing overseas. The FVAP works with states and localities throughout the two-year federal election cycle to produce its publications and ensure the state-specific regulations, deadlines, and contact information are accurate and up to date.

To help ensure states and localities understand their responsibilities under UOCAVA, FVAP staff have attended and addressed officials at conferences of the following national election official organizations:

- National Association of Secretaries of State

- National Association of State Election Directors
- National Association of Election Officials (Election Center) Joint Election Official Liaison Committee

FVAP staff also traveled to address several state conferences of local election officials.

In preparation for 2024, the FVAP attended and addressed 20 state and local election officials at meetings in:

Arizona	North Carolina
Florida	North Dakota
Georgia	Ohio
Iowa	Oklahoma
Louisiana	Oregon
Maryland	South Carolina
Massachusetts	Texas
Montana	Utah
Nebraska	Washington
Nevada	West Virginia

When addressing these state and local election officials, the FVAP reminds them of the responsibilities, practices, and procedures to ensure maximum compliance with UOCAVA. This includes a reminder to transmit requested UOCAVA ballots by the 45th day prior to elections for federal office, offer an electronic option for transmitting blank ballots, provide a free access system for voters to verify receipt of ballot, and notify the voter if, and why, their registration or ballot request is rejected. The FVAP also ensures states and localities understand some of the unique aspects of the UOCAVA absentee voting process to include: military spouses having a

choice where to align their residency between their own legal voting address and that of their military spouse; prior physical presence not necessarily being required; the exemption from National Voter Registration Act state identification requirements; states' determination of voters satisfying residency requirements; the voter's last address in the United States remaining the valid address for voting purposes; and that all election materials sent to UOCAVA voters are postage free.

The Department works hard to ensure that uniformed service voters are informed about upcoming elections as well as the procedures for registering and requesting an absentee ballot. In 2024, the FVAP continued to build upon research-based strategies that proved successful in 2020 and 2022 to increase brand recognition and raise awareness of FVAP resources, including positioning FVAP.gov as the leading official source of absentee voting information for the military, their families, and overseas citizens. These strategies included:

- encouraging voters to act earlier to avoid missing deadlines;
- increasing the number of UOCAVA voters reached through advanced data science techniques;
- reaching voters directly in their homes and through trusted community organizations;
- outreach methods to drive U.S. citizens who want to vote but require assistance to FVAP.gov and local installations or Department of State resources; and
- focusing on the absentee voting steps that specific UOCAVA audiences found most problematic.

Specific tactics used in 2022 based on lessons learned and stakeholder recommendations included:

- deadlines throughout the election cycle to spur action along with reminders about those deadlines;
- information and resources with a customer service orientation to guide a voter throughout the entire absentee voting process; and
- access to tools that simplify completion and submission of the FPCA and FWAB.

Throughout 2024, FVAP communicated the key message that military members, their eligible family members, and overseas U.S. citizens can vote in federal elections from anywhere in the world. FVAP adjusts its messaging to coincide with the overall election calendar and addresses each step of the voting process for UOCAVA voters. Messaging in 2024 continued to put greater emphasis on using the FPCA (to identify oneself as a UOCAVA voter to state and local election offices), highlighting states and localities as trusted and accurate sources of election information, clarifying state voting residency guidelines, and using the FWAB as a backup ballot. FVAP's integrated marketing and communications campaign achieved its goals of engaging UOCAVA voters through a combination of advertising, news media, social media, and direct outreach. The campaign was focused on driving voters to FVAP.gov and encouraging voters to use the online form completion tools or downloadable forms to complete the FPCA and FWAB for submission to their election office. As required by UOCAVA, email blasts about voting were sent monthly to every active-duty Service member. Election reminders were also included on leave and earnings statements of all Service members and overseas DoD personnel.

Communication is facilitated through extensive command support. Messages regarding absentee voting are included on the Military Service websites, in the Plans of the Day, and at Commander's Call briefings. Physical and electronic banners were deployed on domestic and foreign based U.S. installations to inform Service members and eligible family members of their

right to vote. Installations support Armed Forces Voters Week, Military Spouse Voters Week, and Absentee Voting Week. Efforts extend to family members through displays, voter registration drives, and information at Morale, Welfare and Recreation Facilities, Family Service Centers, medical facilities, commissaries and exchanges, and DoD Education Activity Schools.

The FVAP also cooperates in sharing state-specific UOCAVA absentee voting information with non-governmental voter assistance organizations. As some organizations' online tools may offer voters digitized signing methods or submit the voter's documents through an organizational email address, the FVAP works to connect these organizations directly with states to help ensure states and localities are able to accept and process forms as generated through third party sites.

Congressional funding has allowed the FVAP to award grant funding directly to 24 states and local consortiums administering elections to explore reduction of failure rates for UOCAVA voters and establish and maintain a pipeline of data, ideas, techniques, and best practices for election officials nationwide as they serve these voters. The grantees are using the nearly 25 million dollars in grant funds to establish and operate successful, sustainable, and affordable tools to improve UOCAVA required electronic transmission of outbound (blank) ballots sent from election offices to voters, track outbound mailed ballots, and explore the use of digital signature verification like the Department of Defense Common Access Card on election documents.

In summary, the Department provides voters and Voting Assistance Officers the tools, materials, and information necessary to facilitate registration, ballot request, and ballot transmission. The Services distribute Voting Assistance Guides, FPCAs and FWABs to their installation and unit level Voting Assistance Officers and individual voters. Finally, the number

of voters assisted, and the type of assistance provided are tracked by the Services using FVAP's Admin Portal.

Over the last two years, the Department has continued to build on the successes of the past. Efforts of the Department, the U.S. Postal Service, the Department of Justice, the Department of State, other federal agencies, and state and local governments are giving UOCAVA voters the opportunity to participate again in 2026 and future elections.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I thank you, the Ranking Member, and the members of this Committee for your outstanding and unwavering support of those who vote under UOCAVA protections and the men and women who proudly wear the uniform in defense of our great Nation.

Chairman STEIL.

[Presiding.] Thank you very much, Dr. Clark. Thank you both for being with us today.

I thank Representative Loudermilk for his assistance in the opening as a veteran. This hits close to home I know for him but I think for all of us.

I will recognize myself for 5 minutes for the purpose of asking questions.

I want to dive into the numbers and just stage-set a little bit. If we go back to the 2022 general election, the most recent midterm, according to the U.S. Census, approximately 69 percent of the voting age population was registered to vote and, of those registered, 52 percent actually voted.

Then we go over to the UOCAVA side, active-duty military voters in particular, according to FVAP, the 2022 congressional report, the registration rate was approximately 63 percent, a little lower than the national average, but only 26 percent, less than half, actually voted, significantly lower than the national average.

I want to use that as a stage setting and then kind of dive in here.

How does FVAP retrieve data for its biennial congressional report? I will start with you, Dr. Clark.

Ms. CLARK. Thank you for the question, Chairman.

I am going to ask Mr. Wiedmann to provide the specific data for that.

Chairman STEIL. That would be great.

Mr. WIEDMANN. Good morning, Chairman Steil.

After each Federal election, we do a series of surveys of active-duty military members, the Voting Assistance Officers, the election officials and—State election officials. Then in 2024, for the first time we worked with the Department of Defense to do surveys of spouses as well to gather that data.

Chairman STEIL. How much does it cost to run that survey and provide the FVAP congressional report? I will allow either of you to answer as we bounce between.

Ms. CLARK. No. We will take the cost for the record, please.

Chairman STEIL. Do you have an estimate as to what the cost is? I would like the number in the record, but do you know what the cost is or have an estimate as to what that cost is?

Mr. WIEDMANN. I do not want to answer because I am not sure offhand exactly. It is right in the front cover of our report because—

Chairman STEIL. OK. We will track it down.

Let me shift gears again. Do active-duty servicemembers face unique obstacles? Obviously, they do. What is FVAP doing in particular to make sure that people are voting and bringing up that percentage as we look out to the next midterm?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Chairman Steil, there are three major obstacles that can make the absentee voting process more difficult sometimes for military members: time, distance, and mobility.

From the time perspective, we encourage all military members in January of every year to send in that Federal postcard application form so that their local election officials are aware of that they are not at home, that they need an absentee ballot sent to them.

Then we also want them to—we encourage them to take advantage of the 45-day mailing time. As you know, Federal law guarantees that States will send the ballots to the military voters at the 45th day before the election. They can receive it electronically. In their email inbox they can have that ballot, print it out, vote it, and then get it mailed back and take full advantage of that.

Chairman STEIL. With our limited time—I appreciate that. With our limited time, let me just dive in. I just got the number pulled. \$2.4 million. That seems like a lot of money, but maybe something—I would love a little additional information on why it costs that much, but I am going to hold that.

I just want to touch base on how you are coordinating with State and local election officials to ensure that ballots are reaching the right jurisdiction. How are you coordinating with State and local officials?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We work very closely with the State and local election officials from across the country, 55 States and territories, and the District of Columbia. Right now, we are in full swing in preparation for the 2026 election. We have the Voting Assistance Guidebook, which contains the voting dates, the regulations, rules and deadlines for the voters from every jurisdiction.

We also have the contact information—mail, phone, fax, and email—for all those jurisdictions in that book as well as on the FVAP.gov website. We ensure that all that information is accurate and up to date so that when a voter fills out that Federal postcard application form and it is received by the election official, it will have everything they need to process the form and get the ballot to the voter.

Chairman STEIL. Whose responsibility is it to verify the identity of the voter, is that FVAP or is that the State?

Mr. WIEDMANN. That would be the local election office who receives the Federal postcard application.

Chairman STEIL. So it is the State's responsibility to confirm the identity of the individual?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Correct.

Chairman STEIL. All right. No further questions. I yield back.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for questions.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you again to the witnesses for being here.

You know, we have advanced a number of ideas that would have increased access for military and overseas voters: ample notice and cure periods for ballot errors, online voter registration in addition to the postcard, improvements to UOCAVA. You know, and the President sadly, as I said earlier, spreads all this mis- and disinformation about voting abroad without any proof.

I am curious. If a voter makes a mistake on their ballot and it does not arrive in time for them to have an opportunity to cure a mistake, particularly in those States that allow it, how do you work with voters to ensure that they have, one, the information necessary to cast a ballot, and that they know of the requirements set forth by the various States?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Thank you, Ranking Member Morelle.

We work closely with States. We have also a hotline that voters can call directly if they do get a notice from their State, if there

is an issue that might arise while that ballot request or the ballot is being processed, so that we can call the State directly, provide information from the voter to the local election official and perhaps they can work that out.

Of course, timing is of the essence. Again, as I said, we encourage folks to start the process as early as possible, take full advantage of that 45-day window and not wait right up until the day of the election to start the process or to make those calls.

Mr. MORELLE. I mentioned earlier that the SAVE Act would end a number of things that would affect UOCAVA voters. For instance, they would no longer have the ability to mail in the postcard to register to vote.

I assume you have taken a look at the SAVE Act, perhaps not, or the President's executive order. How would requirements such as that, how would they impact the UOCAVA voter? Have you done any analysis? You would not be able to register any longer if you are overseas.

Ms. CLARK. Thank you for the question. We are aware of the SAVE Act and the proposed legislation as well as the executive orders.

I did want to just clarify too that the Federal postcard application form, we do look at updating that every 2 years anyway. Right now, though, we understand that the court case is under—or the EO is under litigation right now, and we stand ready to change the form if then needed.

I did want to let you know that we do update that form every 2 years to see if there are—

Mr. MORELLE. But that form would not be—under the executive order, well, and under the SAVE Act, you could not—there would be only in-person registration. People could not—members of the military or overseas individuals could no longer register to vote unless they went to their local office.

Ms. CLARK. Understand, Ranking Member, with the current legislation that is being proposed. From a Departmental perspective, once that legislation comes back to us, we can go through our formal congressional protocols to provide response to that.

Mr. MORELLE. Right.

Ms. CLARK. Right now we stand waiting to see what comes through and waiting for the court cases to—

Mr. MORELLE. Yes, I know. You will agree with me that that would make it—I mean, if you read the plain English reading of the statute or the proposed statute, that it would end online registration for overseas and military voters?

Ms. CLARK. The Department remains, you know, committed to providing a formal congressional response once that legislation comes to us.

Mr. MORELLE. I wanted to just take up—and I only have a minute or so left of my time, but it is striking to me that only 26 percent of military voters who are registered cast a ballot. I mean, that is really a small number and one that is troubling.

The fewer than 4 percent of overseas voters who are non uniform cast ballots, that is staggering to me. Like, when you look at that, you must think, we have got to get this number—I am assuming, I hope that that is your desire.

Can you give me two things that you are working on right now that would dramatically increase both numbers?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Yes. Obviously, it is a voter's choice as to whether or not they want to participate in a process and whether they want to register and ultimately cast a ballot. We do have—

Mr. MORELLE. I get that. But I think you would acknowledge that 3 percent or 3.4 percent for overseas voters, there is clearly something—I mean, it would be odd for overseas voters to choose at a 97 percent rate not to vote versus, you know, the number that my friend the chairman cited for people who are in the Continental or live in the United States.

Mr. WIEDMANN. We send out 90-, 60-, and 30-day reminder notices to all members of the military. That also goes out through State Department channels, through the MASCOT messaging services, to overseas citizens who have registered with the State Department to say that I am overseas living in a particular country. Those reminders go out monthly during an election year to say, these are the elections, these are the States that have primaries coming up.

Mr. MORELLE. I am sorry to interrupt, and I have run out of time, but those are things that you currently do, which no disrespect, but they are obviously not—I was curious as to what things you are thinking about right now that you can do to move that needle dramatically in the direction of more greater participation.

Mr. WIEDMANN. Again, you know, our purpose is to ensure that the voters have the understanding that they are able to vote under Federal law for those Federal offices and that they have the tools and resources to do so if they wish.

Mr. MORELLE. Not to do anything or facilitate anything that would encourage greater participation?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Correct. We are not a get-out-the-vote campaign.

Mr. MORELLE. Got you. I will yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Loudermilk is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today. It is a very important subject.

When I was active duty, I made every effort to vote when I knew there was an election going on. It was very easy—well, being overseas, there was a lot of help during a Presidential election. There is a lot of attention going on. I found it more difficult during midterm elections, which in Georgia, that is when our gubernatorial election is, and more specifically, local, county, and some State elections that may be off cycle, and part of it was even knowing that a specific election was going on.

Really for both of you, is there attention made to these non-Federal elections to active-duty military?

Ms. CLARK. Thank you for the question.

If you have not gone to the FVAP.gov website, I highly recommend it. It is a wealth of knowledge that is for military members, military spouses, as well as overseas citizens. It also has links directly to each State and then each jurisdiction.

To your point of increasing that awareness, our goal is to make sure that every UOCAVA-eligible voter has access to that and is able to link back to their particular State or their locality.

Mr. Wiedmann, can you provide a bit more information on exactly what you do?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Yes. We have a requirement, and the services help us to ensure that every member receives a Federal postcard application form, either electronically or some sort of notice, every January 15th of every year, so that is not just the even-numbered years, and then again in July of the even-numbered years.

If the voter sends that form in to that State or local election office, they would get whatever ballots would come to them during that calendar year.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. All right. I appreciate that. I can remember during the times that I was in, often our squadron commander would send out something advising there is an election going on, we encourage you to vote.

Is that something that you get engagement by commanders, unit commanders, to interface at least to let the troops know that there is an election going on?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Yes. Through the military services, there is the entire chain of command. There is a Service Voting Action Officer for each service that we meet with monthly. Then each installation has an Installation Voting Assistance Officer as well as a brick-and-mortar Voter Assistance Office, and that is typically like in the Military and Family Readiness Center, where families can go as well to get assistance as well as the members.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK. Thank you.

Director Wiedmann, while I have got you, from your experience, are ballots of military voters deployed on active-duty orders susceptible to voter fraud?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We facilitate the connectivity between that voter and that local election official. Then once the election official receives that, they are the ones who would review the ballot for validity and authenticity.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. You are taking it from the servicemember and delivering it to the local elections office or the State? Is that what you are referring to?

Mr. WIEDMANN. The Military Postal Service Agency, when it is dropped off at a military post office on an installation, will take that, and they are an extension of the U.S. Postal Service. Then they will have that delivered to Chicago. Then from there, it goes into the U.S. Postal Service.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK. What steps does FVAP take to ensure election integrity is upheld when assisting servicemembers with voter registration?

Mr. WIEDMANN. A person who is assigned as a voting officer does that job in a nonpartisan way, just basically there to facilitate the process. FVAP provides FVAP.gov and the tools and materials. That local voting officer knows that installation, knows the circumstance they are in, whether it be a submarine or forward deployed, and then will help the voters to navigate the process locally.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. How would that fit in with the uniqueness of certain States and election laws, i.e., in Georgia you have to show an ID to be able to register to vote as well as to vote?

Do you take in consideration of the local election laws when you are registering votes?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We work with those State and local election offices. This book, all the information we provide in here and on our website is signed off by the chief State election official in every State.

We work with Blake Evans in the Secretary of State's Office for Georgia to ensure that everything is accurate and up to date. So when a voter fills this out, it will be accepted by the Georgia county, and the Georgia county would then be able to send that ballot out to the voter.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK. Thank you.

Last question. Are you aware of any credible reporting of bad actors committing voter fraud through UOCAVA ballots?

Mr. WIEDMANN. I am not.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

Representative Sewell is recognized for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. SEWELL. I want to thank our witnesses for being here today.

As the Ranking Member over the Elections Subcommittee as well as author of the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, I think there is nothing more important and fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote. Ensuring that every eligible voter has an opportunity to cast a ballot I think is top and foremost what you all are supposed to do with respect to our servicemembers and those living overseas.

Often I hear from my servicemembers that they do not have an opportunity to cure any problem that may happen with the ballot because of timing. Then I also get a lot of complaints in my office that they do not receive the ballot in time.

I guess my question to you, Director, is, what are you doing to work with the United States Postal Services to make sure that people, that servicemembers and overseas citizens get their ballots in time?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Thank you, Representative Sewell.

We work closely with the U.S. Postal Service as well as the Military Postal Service Agency to ensure that all of the materials that we provide have that postage indicia so it is postage-free in U.S. mails. We also provide the ballot template envelope for State and local officials, so when they print those ballots to be sent out to the voters, those have that postage indicia on there as well.

Ms. SEWELL. Yes, I know that the postage is free; just the timing of receiving it. I get that, you know, the States administer their own elections, but, you know, we administer Federal elections and I want to make sure that folks get their ballots in a timely fashion.

I do not know, Dr. Clark, if you have anything else to add about what we could be doing now to ensure that people get timely ballots. Obviously, if there is a mistake, being able to cure that in a timely fashion.

Ms. CLARK. Yes. As Mr. Wiedmann mentioned as well, we have the Federal write-in absentee ballot. If there are challenges with the State—with a servicemember or UOCAVA-eligible voter receiving their ballot, they are able to then submit the Federal write-in absentee ballot as well.

I think it comes down to ensuring that we are promoting that awareness and that education and that the military services and the installations and the units are also taking this seriously and that it is a priority as well.

We have done a significant amount of work to make sure that we are promoting that awareness, making those tools and resources available, as well as trying to make it as seamless as we possibly can for the UOCAVA-eligible voter.

When Mr. Wiedmann has talked about this Voting Assistance Guide, it has QR codes that takes you directly to that State. You know, our goal here is to make sure that we recognize that voting is a personal choice.

Ms. SEWELL. It is——

Ms. CLARK. We want to ensure that——

Ms. SEWELL. But, I mean, if you want to ensure that eligible voters have an opportunity to vote——

Ms. CLARK. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. SEWELL [continuing]. and I understand the importance of informing them that elections are going on. Your role, obviously, I understand is not to register voters, but it is to ensure that our servicemembers and those who are eligible overseas have an opportunity to cast a ballot.

You know, I think that the FVAP has been, with the changes to it that have been proposed in the court system as well as through the executive order of the President, I think that the Federal postcard can be very complicated, and I know that that is tied up in litigation. Until that has been truly litigated, we are still practicing under the existing laws. Is that right?

Ms. CLARK. That is correct.

Mr. Wiedmann, anything to add specifically on that?

Mr. WIEDMANN. No. That is correct. The Federal postcard application. Then our process, as I stated, we are ramping up for 2026. Part of that process is to review the forms for changes——

Ms. SEWELL. Have you received any complaints from servicemembers or overseas about the postcard itself?

Mr. WIEDMANN. No.

Ms. SEWELL. Would you be the appropriate person that they would lodge those complaints to?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Well, if it is something to do with the processing of the form or the layout of the form, they would come to us and let us know so that we could incorporate that into redesigns, as we do every 2 years. If it is something to do with a person's rights being abridged, then they would go to the Department of Justice, which is the enforcement body.

Ms. SEWELL. Is the FVAP still committed to leveraging other governmental resources to keep all of the eligible servicemembers informed of how they can exercise their right to vote?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. SEWELL. I too, like the Ranking Member, am quite concerned that the percentage of voters that are overseas and their servicemembers is around 26 percent, whereas in the United States, those that vote, it is about 48 percent. Both need to go up to more than 50, in my opinion. Is there anything that you guys are doing right now that would help in reducing that gap?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We look at the—we call it the UOCAVA gap. There is going to be some folks that would not want to vote, but there is a short or a small number of folks that may have wanted to vote but were not able to.

Those are the folks we try to target with our messaging through social media and whatnot to ensure, again, that they have that knowledge that they are able to vote and that they have a link to FVAP.gov, and that once they get there, click the button to say register to vote here. Everything they need in order to register to vote in their State is provided to them, and then they can send that request directly to their county.

Ms. SEWELL. Well, sir, obviously, all of us are committed to making sure that folks get the opportunity to cast a vote who are eligible. Whatever we can do, I would be interested in making sure we can partner with you to make that happen.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record two statements. One from Secure Families Initiative, an organization that works on behalf of active-duty military families; and a second from U.S. Vote Foundation, an organization that works on behalf of all overseas voters on the ways UOCAVA works for military and overseas voters.

Chairman STEIL. Without objection.
[The statements referred to follow:]

Secure Families Initiative Statement for the Record at a Hearing before the Committee on House Administration titled “Serving and Voting: Oversight of the Federal Voting Assistance Program”

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee:

We are pleased to submit a statement for the record on behalf of Secure Families Initiative (SFI). SFI strengthens the collective voices of diverse active-duty military families as an active and influential constituency on the issues that directly impact our lives. Americans have the right to vote whether they’re home or overseas. That includes members of the military and their families, as well as veterans who have continued their life of service as civilians working on overseas installations. That includes diplomats, aid workers, missionaries, and teachers representing America in overseas embassies, field work, churches, and schools.

As families who serve to protect this democracy, we know how important the right to vote is. Federal law has been what has allowed us to vote in elections back home about the things that matter to us and our families—the things we’re fighting for.

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) was a bipartisan protection of this right, signed into law by President Reagan in 1986. Later, the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act passed in 2010 to make improvements that continued making voting accessible to our community. The UOCAVA voting community reflects America. They come from all 54 states and territories, and the District of Columbia. They come from rural areas, small and large towns, and cities. They have a variety of educational experiences and backgrounds. They include members from every ethnic group, religion, and sexual orientation.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has provided crucial assistance to our military and overseas voters over the years. Without FVAP, too many military families and citizens living abroad would get tripped up by the complexities of absentee voting and lose connection to their home communities. Our organization has appreciated the opportunities we’ve had to partner with FVAP on outreach efforts, and we look forward to future collaborations where we can elevate the lived experiences of our voters to continue improving those services.

Across the board, it’s clear that our voting systems work. Every state has multiple security checks in place to make sure only eligible citizens can vote from abroad. Citizens voting from overseas must meet the same registration and identification requirements as all other voters in order to register to vote and request a ballot. Our elections are secure. Our community has relied on these institutions for generations.

As military families we know that patriotism is not solely tied to where you live in the world. Patriotism is about a love for our nation, our people, and our values. We encourage you to remember this as you discuss policies and programs that can make voting either easier or harder for Americans serving our country from far away.



June 24, 2025

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
 1526 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joseph D. Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
 570 Cannon House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing on behalf of U.S. Vote Foundation (www.usvotefoundation.org) and our Overseas Vote initiative (www.overseasvotefoundation.org) to urge your continued attention to the voting rights of U.S. citizens living abroad and members of the Uniformed Services and their families. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) is a cornerstone of inclusive democratic participation — however, its promise is constrained by low participation and persistent misunderstandings.

Founded in 2005 as Overseas Vote Foundation and renamed in 2015 as U.S. Vote Foundation, our organization has worked continuously for nearly two decades to improve the voting process for Americans who are absent from their stateside domicile at election time. We are the only nonpartisan, nonprofit, charitable organization that develops and delivers a complete suite of civic technology services for every type of voter — domestic, military, and overseas alike.

We pioneered the civic tech infrastructure that has made secure, accessible overseas and military voting a reality. Ours was the first organization to program and deploy a guided, federal-compliant online process for the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), followed by automation of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

The transformative reforms introduced by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act were the product of years of dedicated work — not just from our foundation, but through collaboration among the Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), election officials, federal agencies, and trusted non-governmental partners like U.S.

Vote Foundation. One of the most consequential innovations — online blank ballot delivery — was studied and affirmed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as a secure method of facilitating overseas voting before it was adopted as part of national reform.

Today, we can state unequivocally that the UOCAVA program works. It is secure. It is dependable. It is broadly accessible. And there is zero evidence — not even a single case — of voter fraud perpetrated by overseas or military voters.

Yet, we face a persistent challenge: participation remains stagnant. While we've addressed many of the logistical and technical barriers that once plagued the process — late-arriving ballots, confusing state requirements, inaccessible information — these improvements have not translated into increased voter turnout among the overseas and military population.

Our post-election research, conducted following every general election since 2008, reveals that the UOCAVA voting process is smooth, timely and easy for the majority of voters who participate. We can deduce that the reasons for lack of participation are outside of the process itself and have more to do with misunderstandings. Many voters don't know they are eligible. Others mistakenly believe voting from abroad is risky, insecure, or won't be counted. These myths continue to depress turnout. We urge the Committee to review our published guide to assist voters with these concerns.

U.S. Vote Foundation calls on the Committee to take up the next generation of UOCAVA reforms — reforms that build on the program's success to increase voter participation. Our recommendations are outlined in our reform agenda. Chief among them are automatic registration for uniformed services members, codification of the right to vote in federal elections under the protection of UOCAVA for all children born to U.S. citizens abroad, and a 45-day combined voter registration/ballot request/ballot form.

U.S. Vote Foundation and our Overseas Vote initiative are ready to support the Committee in any review or reform process. We offer both technical expertise and deep experience rooted in two decades of work with UOCAVA voters.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to protecting and strengthening our democracy — for all citizens, wherever they may be.

Sincerely,



Mark Ritchie
Acting Chair
U.S. Vote Foundation



Susan Dzieduszycka-Suinat
President and CEO
U.S. Vote Foundation

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, sir. I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Dr. Murphy, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for coming here today, and thank you for your contributions that are helping our servicemembers and those abroad participate in the process of voting.

I am honored to represent three military installations in eastern North Carolina, totaling more than 50,000 active-duty servicemembers. We obviously want them to participate in the process if they want to participate in the process, so I appreciate you guys doing this.

North Carolina is a popular destination for people moving to the U.S. In fact, we are sinking a little bit because so many people are moving here, especially on the Outer Banks. You know, many North Carolinians also choose to live abroad.

I appreciate what you guys are doing to help educate individuals through UOCAVA for the opportunity to vote. I am remiss. I have not gone on your website, but I look forward to doing that today because it sounds like there is a great deal of information there.

You know, to what Ranking Member Morelle said about only 3 percent of individuals voting overseas, that is amazing to me. Maybe they are in Bali and they just do not want to be bothered. I do not know. 3 percent does seem like a very low amount.

Let me ask you this. You guys, what kind of educational materials are you able to provide through UOCAVA to voters who are located near the embassy in countries, and then for folks that do not live near the embassy in a lot of other countries, I wonder if you could educate me on that?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Thank you, Representative Murphy.

We work very closely with the State Department, and they have the American citizen services desk at every embassy and consulate. So that if an American needs a new passport or some sort of other service for American citizens, they go there to get that.

One of the things they do is provide assistance—voting assistance. Anybody behind that glass window, if an American citizens walks in, would be able to get the same assistance that a voter would get from a voting officer in the military.

They also post a ballot receptacle closer out to the street so that a voter does not necessarily have to go in all the way through the security in order to drop off a ballot or to get the assistance if they have already printed out the form and done that.

Of course, all of the materials that we print, from the guidebook to the forms to the various wallet cards and whatnot, are also provided to the State Department so they can—if someone gets a new passport, for instance, they will put the wallet card that says FVAP.gov in there, and then they will be able to have that.

One key messaging point is that that MASCOT messaging I mentioned earlier, which is when you move to a country you sign up through the Department of State and say, I am living in this country, so that if there is a natural disaster or some other reason that they may need to evacuate Americans, they can send the messages quickly.

One of the things they can do with those messaging is send out voting messages. They can use it for other things, and voting is one of those.

Dr. MURPHY. Yes. It sounds you all are doing a tremendous job. I am not quite sure what more you can do. You can lead a horse to water, but if people do not want to vote, they do not want to vote. If they are overseas, maybe they like living in the country that they are in and they identify more with the politics there than they do back home. Anyway, thank you.

Let me ask you a couple other questions. As I mentioned, I have a lot of active-duty military that are oftentimes abroad, overseas. Can you talk about the FVAP's digital presence and how we are able to do that for turnout? How do we reach out to those individuals?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Yes, sir. We have an outreach campaign. We take advantage of paid, earned, shared and owned media, both in social media and online. We have efforts with the local election officials where we have like outreach toolkits that are digital, so that any individual that is with an overseas citizen organization, a State Department person or a military person can download those digital toolkits, and then on their own social media accounts—

Dr. MURPHY. Do you think those have—you know, given the technology age, what trends have you seen? Do you think those make a difference or are we still seeing the same trends in participation that we have seen historically?

Mr. WIEDMANN. The participation generally goes along with interest in the election. Part of the surveys that we do, we ask about what the individual's interest was in the election as well as their participation. You can see how it tracks over time. When the interest is high, participation is generally higher in the election.

Dr. MURPHY. Have those curves been pretty much identical over the last decades, interest, interest, interest?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Yes.

Dr. MURPHY. OK. You know, it just stands to reason. You know, people who are living abroad, if they have an interest back home, they are going to participate in something, especially a Presidential election. I can see, just like it does in the U.S. midterms, people, often they lose their interest. I will end with that.

Thank you for your service. You are doing a great job. I mean, I do not know how else you can get to people other than go to their homes and, you know, offer them a ride, which we do not need to do. Thank you for your service.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

The gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Johnson, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for being here today.

In April, my colleagues on the Republican side passed the SAVE Act, which further restricts married women, naturalized citizens, and our military members overseas from exercising their ability to vote.

I want to specifically point out that this bill does not include any exemptions for our servicemembers and, instead, would require

them to register to vote in person in the United States, creating a significant administrative and financial burden.

I proposed an amendment to allow folks to register to vote by mail, which this country has been doing safely for decades. That amendment was voted down by Republicans on this Committee and again on the House floor. This is very troubling to me.

I have some questions about, when our servicemembers enlist to serve in the military, are they automatically registered to vote?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Thank you, Representative Johnson.

They are not automatically registered to vote. However, they are given the tools and training to know that they have the opportunity to vote, you know, once they are enlisted, they are on active duty.

Ms. JOHNSON. Right.

Mr. WIEDMANN. Then they have those tools and resources.

Ms. JOHNSON. If they are not registered to vote at the time they are enlisted, then they want to register to vote, under the SAVE Act they would be required to physically leave their station post abroad and fly to their home residential jurisdiction to register to vote. Is that correct?

Ms. CLARK. Thank you for the question.

With the SAVE Act specifically, the Department will take that for the record with a formal response back.

Ms. JOHNSON. I understand that. We passed that law so we know what the law is, and I understand your not really wanting to comment on it. I am trying to ask some questions about the practical applicability of that.

Under that law, though, what hurdles would a servicemember have to do to get leave to be able to fly home and register to vote in their county if they wanted to exercise their right to vote if that bill ultimately succeeds?

Ms. CLARK. We will take that for the record.

Ms. JOHNSON. Would they have to take leave to fly home?

Ms. CLARK. We will have to take that for the record.

Ms. JOHNSON. I am sorry, what?

Ms. CLARK. We will have to take that for the record.

Ms. JOHNSON. You are not going to answer my question?

Ms. CLARK. Due to the breadth and depth of the legislation, the Department will take it back and give you our formal protocol.

Ms. JOHNSON. Well, my question is not taking it back for the record. My question is, what steps would a servicemember have to do to take a leave of absence to be able to come home to register to vote? What is involved in that?

Ms. CLARK. Yes, ma'am. It is outside of my portfolio when we are looking at the entitlement to the benefits to the specific servicemembers. I will have to take that back for the record.

Ms. JOHNSON. OK. The—because I am just very troubled by that whole situation.

The next question I have is, how many employees does FVAP currently have, and has this changed since January, and has the administration's Federal hiring freeze impacted FVAP's ability to conduct its mission?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We currently have seven employees, and we are able to carry out the requirements under UOCAVA.

Ms. JOHNSON. Has your employees been reduced in force since January? Has that level changed since that time?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We have had a couple of our employees who have taken retirement packages.

Ms. JOHNSON. How many employees of your agency took early retirement pursuant to the administration's RIF?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Three.

Ms. JOHNSON. Three. You have seven. 30 percent of your workforce. Is that right?

Mr. WIEDMANN.

[No verbal response.]

Ms. JOHNSON. Do you need any additional resources or funding in order to carry out your mission?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Under the current resources and funding, we are able to carry out the requirements of the law.

Ms. JOHNSON. OK. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from Janessa Goldbeck, a Marine Corps veteran, former Voting Assistance Officer, and the CEO of Vet Voice Foundation, a nonpartisan organization of nearly 2 million veterans and military families nationwide.

Chairman STEIL. Without objection.

[The statement referred to follows:]



June 23, 2025

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Joseph Morelle
Ranking Member, Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

On behalf of Vet Voice Foundation, a nonpartisan organization of nearly 2 million veterans and military families nationwide, thank you for holding a hearing on “Serving and Voting: Oversight of the Federal Voting Assistance Program.”

Ensuring our servicemembers and their families, and all Americans living abroad, are able to exercise their fundamental right to vote is deeply personal to me. During my time in the Marine Corps, I served as a Voting Assistance Officer. I was also stationed outside of my home state and voted by absentee ballot. I know firsthand the importance of ensuring that servicemembers can exercise their fundamental right to vote, even when stationed in remote and challenging environments.

As both a veteran and representative of the Vet Voice community, I am deeply concerned by recently proposed changes to the voting process that would impose significant burdens on Americans voting from overseas. The SAVE Act, for example, would require in-person proof of citizenship at a government office in the United States when registering or updating voter registration. This requirement is simply unworkable for servicemembers deployed overseas and would effectively disenfranchise those who have sworn to defend our nation.

Even for military personnel stationed stateside, SAVE would make it unnecessarily difficult to register. It fails to recognize military IDs as valid proof of citizenship unless accompanied by additional service records, and it entirely excludes military voters born abroad—many of whom are

the children of U.S. service members. This is an unacceptable barrier for those who serve our country.

Beyond the military community, the SAVE Act would make voter registration significantly harder for all Americans by requiring specific documentation—such as a birth certificate or passport—that many eligible voters do not readily have. Millions of Americans, particularly married women, do not have birth certificates that reflect their current legal names, and millions more do not have passports. Additionally, the bill mandates frequent and rushed voter roll purges based on unreliable data, which could result in servicemembers and other voters being wrongfully removed without timely notification, jeopardizing their ability to cast a ballot.

The SAVE Act also undermines state-led efforts to improve access to voter registration by effectively banning or restricting widely used and secure methods such as automatic voter registration, online registration, and mail-in registration. These systems have been instrumental in ensuring voter participation while maintaining election security. Furthermore, the bill places election officials at risk of severe criminal penalties for inadvertent registration errors, discouraging qualified public servants from administering elections effectively.

All American citizens, whether they serve our country in uniform, belong to a military family, or are simply living overseas, have a sacred right to participate in our elections. And it is a sacred responsibility of Congress to safeguard that right.

Servicemembers like myself fought to defend American freedoms – including the right to vote. I urge you to put aside partisan politics, oppose attacks on voting rights, and come together to advance commonsense, bipartisan policies to protect election integrity while ensuring that every eligible American, whether they live at home or abroad, can exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Vet Voice stands ready to support you in these efforts.

Respectfully,



Janessa Goldbeck
Marine Corps Veteran
CEO, Vet Voice Foundation

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you. Thank you for your time, and I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Carey, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CAREY. I want to thank the chairman and thank the Ranking Member.

You know, one of the greatest privileges we have as American citizens is the right to determine the direction of our country every 2 to 4 years.

The Great American Experiment, which is closing in on our 250th birthday, has proved that this right for all Americans, regardless of class, religion, race or creed. However, many of our citizens who are overseas find it difficult to participate in the State and local and Federal elections, particularly among our U.S. servicemembers.

As a veteran myself, I find it critical that we give every opportunity for our military members to register for elections. That is why the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act and the Federal Voting Assistance Program are necessary to ensure that servicemembers who want to have their vote have the ability to actually vote.

Now I am going to ask you just a couple quick questions. I am the last one to ask questions.

Director and Dr. Clark, what metrics does the Federal Voting Assistance Program use to determine if the efforts to provide the opportunity for military and overseas voters to vote are successful?

You can both go.

Mr. WIEDMANN. Thank you, Representative Carey.

We look at the awareness of the program and the awareness of folks' ability to utilize the tools and resources available to them. We also ask the Voting Assistance Officers how well the materials that we provided, both the book itself and the online presence, if that was a useful tool for them. We usually get, you know, ratings in the 90's of people finding it useful as they are delivering voting assistance.

Mr. CAREY. Let me ask you, because you pointed to that book a couple of times. I know that we on this Committee are trying to make sure that we modernize the way things are done.

The online presence with the information that is in the book is readily available to everybody, correct?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Correct. It is up to date. This book is printed every 2 years, because we want to make sure that we have something out there for folks who may not have internet access who are having a voting assistance or voting registration drive. They can refer to the book.

The online information is updated real time. You know, we might have an election office in a particular Ohio county that changes their address, and we can get that updated on the website.

Mr. CAREY. Has FVAP increased its outreach and education to the U.S. servicemembers overseas, in your opinion?

Mr. WIEDMANN. We continually seek out new ways to reach out to folks that would fit and target folks directly, especially that 18-to 24-year-old cohort.

Mr. CAREY. OK. Let me ask the director and doctor. How many early prior to an election are the UOCAVA ballots sent to servicemembers? How many are usually sent out? Do you have any idea?

Mr. WIEDMANN. In the 2022 election, I believe there were 754,000, yes, sent out. In the 2020 election, 1.2 million ballots were sent out to military and overseas voters.

Mr. CAREY. What is usually the timeframe that the servicemembers would get those ballots?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Depending on—so when they use the form, they say if they want the ballot to be delivered to them by mail or email or if a State has an online server that they can download it from. That is the voter's choice on how they want to receive that.

The States have to provide the ballots 45 days before an election for Federal office. They will put it either in the mail or they will put them online and send an email to the voter saying, "hey, your ballot is now available," and then they have that at that point.

Mr. CAREY. Historically, do you think this is enough time for a servicemember to receive and then cast their ballot to be counted in time on election day?

Mr. WIEDMANN. Based on the Military Postal Service Agency's recommended mailing dates, 30 days is the maximum time for folks aboard ship and deployed overseas. The 45 days should suffice.

Mr. CAREY. OK. Well, I want to thank you both for being here today.

I want to again thank the chairman and the Ranking Member. With that, I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

We thank both of our witnesses for being here today on a really important topic. I appreciate your work in the area. I think there is also room for improvement as we work to get more members to participate in the election process.

Members of the Committee may have some additional questions. We ask you to please respond to those questions in writing.

Without objection, each Member will have 5 legislative days to insert additional material into the record or to advise and extend their remarks.

If there is no further business, I thank the Members for their participation. Without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:27 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Rep. Laurel Lee Questions for the Record
House Administration Committee Hearing:
“Serving and Voting: Oversight of the Federal Voting Assistance Program”
June 24, 2025

Director Scott Wiedmann, Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program

- 1) **Director Wiedmann, can you describe the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and tell us who is eligible to use it?**

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) serves as the primary means of communication between a Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voter and their Local Election Official (LEO). The FPCA is a multipurpose form that can be used to: register to vote; request an absentee ballot; and update voter contact information with the LEO. A properly completed FPCA is essential for ensuring that UOCAVA voters receive their absentee ballots in a timely manner.

The following individuals are eligible to use the FPCA:

- Members of the Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and their eligible family members who are absent from their place of residence where they are qualified to vote.
- U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

- a. **Is there a difference between registering to vote and voting using the FPCA?**

The FPCA is used to *initiate* the absentee voting process by registering to vote or requesting an absentee ballot from the LEO. The FPCA itself is not a ballot. Once the LEO receives and processes the FPCA, they send the voter an official absentee ballot for the specific election.

- b. **Have there been any issues with the availability of Federal Post Card Application Forms?**

To date, there have been no reported systemic issues regarding the availability of the FPCA. Each Military Service and Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) is required to provide the FPCA to their respective personnel and eligible family members no later than January 15th of each year and no later than July 15th of even-numbered years, as mandated by law. VAOs are authorized to procure FPCA forms directly from the General Services Administration (GSA). Additionally, the FPCA is readily accessible online at FVAP.gov, where a downloadable version of the form is available in Portable Document Format (PDF) at <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca.pdf>. UOCAVA voters also have the option of using the FVAP Online Assistant, accessible at <https://www.fvap.gov/fpca>, to complete and generate a FPCA form for signature and transmission to the LEO.

2) **Can you explain to us what a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) is?**

The FWAB is a contingency ballot designed for use by UOCAVA voters who may not receive their requested official absentee ballot in a timely manner. It can be used in all states and territories to vote for federal offices, including President/Vice President, U.S. Senator, and U.S. Representative, as well as Delegate or Resident Commissioner where applicable. Some states also permit the FWAB to be used for state and local offices, ballot questions, and referenda. Voters should consult their state's election website for specific details.

a. **When and under what circumstances do UOCAVA voters use a FWAB instead of a FPCA?**

As mentioned above, the FPCA itself is not a ballot. UOCAVA voters should use a FWAB instead of, or in anticipation of, receiving their official absentee ballot under the following circumstances:

- **Non-Receipt of Official Absentee Ballot:** The primary and most common reason is that the voter has not received their official absentee ballot from their local election official within a reasonable timeframe before the election. While specific timeframes may vary, it is generally recommended to use the FWAB if the official ballot has not been received at least 30 days prior to the election.
- **Circumstances Preventing Timely Receipt:** Voters who anticipate being unable to receive their official absentee ballot due to circumstances, such as deployment to a remote location or assignment to a vessel at sea (e.g., submariners), may also use the FWAB.

To be eligible to use the FWAB, a voter must have submitted a valid FPCA or other absentee ballot request no later than 30 days before the election for federal office, or by the state's absentee ballot request deadline.

3) **Can you describe the difference between a digital and a digitized signature and share related issues the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has been presented with respect to the UOCAVA absentee voting process?**

A *digitized signature* is a digital image of a handwritten signature, often a scanned copy, used to visually represent a signature on electronic documents. It is essentially a picture of a signature. A *digital signature* is a cryptographic mechanism that uses mathematical algorithms to verify the authenticity and integrity of digital messages or documents. Digital signatures provide assurance that the document has not been altered and that the signer is who they claim to be. They generally appear on a document as a rectangle containing the signers printed name, identification number, and a time and date indicator.

Currently, three states – Maryland, Michigan, and Montana – accept digital signatures for certain aspects of the UOCAVA absentee voting process. FVAP provides guidance to UOCAVA voters to utilize a "wet signature" (a handwritten signature in ink). Even when

using the PDF version of the FPCA or the FVAP Online Assistant, FVAP instructs voters to print the form, sign it by hand, and send to their LEO in accordance with state law.

- 4) **In 2009, the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act was enacted, which amended UOCAVA to include new voter registration procedures for states, including the requirement for ballots to be transmitted to voters at least 45 days before an election. What changes have you seen in voter turnout since the MOVE Act was passed?**

FVAP's primary mission is to enhance voter awareness and facilitate access to the electoral process for UOCAVA voters, rather than directly focusing on voter participation rates. This is accomplished by ensuring 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.

- a. **Did the MOVE Act increase voter turnout more for active-duty military voters or for overseas citizens?**

After each election cycle, FVAP monitors voter participation trends among UOCAVA voters. While direct correlations with specific UOCAVA amendments are difficult to establish definitively, our analysis of data from reports to Congress since 2010 (available at <https://www.fvap.gov/info/reports-surveys/search-reports-surveys?searchText=&filter=Filter&type=1&subType=4&year=&fileType=&surveyPopulation=>) indicates that implementation of the MOVE Act amendments to UOCAVA for both military and overseas U.S. citizens coincided with observable fluctuations in voter turnout. However, these fluctuations appear to be primarily driven by factors such as the competitiveness of individual races and the cyclical nature of election years, with Presidential election years typically exhibiting higher levels of engagement.

- 5) **The MOVE Act also requires states to provide UOCAVA voters with the option to receive absentee ballots electronically. Does FVAP provide any guidance or assistance to states and local elections officials to help them ensure the cybersecurity of ballots transmitted electronically?**

- a. **If so, can you describe what these efforts look like?**

No, FVAP does not provide any guidance or assistance to states and local elections officials to help them ensure the cybersecurity of ballots transmitted electronically. However, FVAP's previous research in this area is contained in the Electronic Voting Demonstration Project Research report of December 2015. The research was conducted to inform the project planning and execution of the Department of Defense's previously mandated electronic voting demonstration requirement. Congress eliminated this requirement in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, and DoD is no longer exploring program implementation in this area.

b. Are you aware of any cybersecurity challenges or vulnerabilities surrounding electronic transmission of UOCAVA ballots?

While FVAP does not have current, specific awareness of cybersecurity challenges, we believe the identification of outstanding questions in this area and research into these issues are valuable and should be shared with the UOCAVA stakeholder community as it may hold value for any future deliberations on the merits of remote electronic voting [<https://www.fvap.gov/info/reports-surveys/evdp-report>]. In January 2017, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security classified election systems as critical infrastructure and includes systems tailored for UOCAVA-eligible voters.