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June 25, 2010

## **FVAP MARKS ARMED FORCES AND OVERSEAS CITIZENS' VOTERS WEEK**

*AGENCY TO LAUNCH ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION ASSISTANT TO EASE REGISTRATION PROCESS*

June 25, 2010 - Arlington, VA – The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) will launch an online voter registration assistant in conjunction with Armed Forces Voters Week (AFVW) and Overseas Citizens' Voters Week (OCVW) June 28-July 7, to help more than 6 million military, their voting age dependents, and overseas voters better navigate the registration process. The new online FVAP Voter Registration Assistant, available Monday, helps automate a once cumbersome, manual process in advance of the mid-term elections. Go to [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) to register and request your absentee ballot.

The online FVAP Voter Registration Assistant guides users through voter registration, avoiding the confusion of navigating the State-by-State instructions to fill out the registration forms. Guiding voters step-by-step ensures that all information is filled out completely before moving on. At the end of the process, the assistant provides the completed form for signature and the appropriate address and delivery information for their voting district (mail, fax or email).

In 2008, FVAP asked local election officials why registration and absentee ballots were rejected. The responses indicated that the voting forms were inadequate, incomplete or mailed to the wrong jurisdiction. Since Uniformed Service and overseas voters must start the voting process earlier than their stateside friends and relatives, fewer mistakes at the outset of the process ensures that the appropriate documentation is received and returned on time.

"You may be absent come Election Day, but you CAN be accounted for," remarked Bob Carey, FVAP Director. "Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov), fill out your registration and absentee ballot application online, and send it back in July so that your election official has time to process it and send you back your absentee ballot for the November general election."

To support the launch of the online assistant, and in celebration of AFVW and OCVW, FVAP has also unveiled a worldwide marketing campaign designed to direct voters to [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), where they can find and utilize the absentee voting resources made available by the government.

## **New Campaign Encourages Participation**

As Armed Forces and Overseas Citizens' Voter Week gets underway, FVAP is also launching a robust marketing and communications campaign to increase voter awareness of FVAP.gov, to educate voters on the voting process, and increase voter success rates.

Underscoring the message that as a military member or overseas citizen, you can "be absent, but be accounted for" the campaign will ultimately include usage of online assistants, websites, electronic games, and TV as well as print advertisements. Starting next week, advertisements will run in *Military Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, and *Stars and Stripes*. Additional ads will appear in the August issue of *Military Spouse* magazine.

The communications campaign and the online Voter Registration Assistant will launch during AFVW and OCVW, June 28-July 7, 2010. AFVW and OCVW are coordinated efforts by the Department of Defense and the Department of State to reach out to all military and overseas citizens. The purpose of this week is to encourage all citizens voting under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* who have not registered to vote or requested an absentee ballot this year, to do so at this time.

Military and civilian organizations will host voter outreach programs during this week with activities like:

- Registration drives
- Strategic placement of voting materials
- Informational meetings
- Publicizing the upcoming election and focus on the importance of voting

With the full support of the Secretary of Defense, FVAP encourages both military and Department of State Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) to enlist the help of organizations to participate in AFVW and OCVW. Organizations such as spouse clubs, family services, Boy/Girl Scouts and other groups that support absentee voting for citizens residing outside the United States can be effective venues for holding voter registration drives, informational forums and other non-partisan activities which stress the importance of participating in the upcoming elections.

For more information please visit [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). If you'd like more information on the campaign or to schedule an interview with Director Carey, please contact Erin St Pierre at [Erin.StPierre@fvap.gov](mailto:Erin.StPierre@fvap.gov).

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