



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301

MAY 5 2003

Administration
& Management

Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with Sec. 701(b) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, I am forwarding the enclosed report on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. The report addresses postmarking of overseas voting materials. The measures summarized in the enclosure will ensure that a postmark or other official proof of mailing date be provided on each absentee ballot collected at any overseas location or vessel at sea whenever the Department of Defense is responsible for collecting mail for return shipment to the United States. These measures will help in the timely delivery of absentee ballots to their final destination.

The Department appreciates the interest of Congress in supporting proper handling of voting materials for absentee registration and voting by citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. DuBois".

Raymond F. DuBois
Director

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
Honorable Ike Skelton
Ranking Minority Member

REPORT TO CONGRESS REGARDING TRANSMITTAL AND POSTMARKING OF VOTING MATERIALS

Sec. 701(b) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 requires a report describing the measures to be implemented to ensure the timely transmittal and postmarking of voting materials and identifying the persons responsible for implementing such measures. The Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) who administers the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* continues to work with the Military Postal Service Agency in their implementation of the following measures.

- Provided advanced notice to each Combatant Commander and major command postal representative of the requirements of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (NDAA-FY02) about expeditious processing of voting materials and required surveys.
- E-mail sent to each Combatant Commander and major command postal representative providing advanced notice about the importance of postmarking, citing the necessity for proper attention to voting materials, recommending mail transit time, and requiring voting material surveys.
- Message to all postal staff commands citing requirements of DoD Postal Manual 4525.6-M, which states that all absentee balloting material must be postmarked and receive expeditious processing. It also cited NDAA-FY02 requiring: survey of voting materials; expeditious transmission of voting materials at all times and deployed vessels postmark voting materials.
- Revised wording in DoD Postal Manual 4525.6-M to be more specific on processing voting materials and promulgated this change.
- Sent e-mail reminder to major command postal representative about the due date for the first voting survey report.
- Coordinated with U.S. Postal Service to obtain new postmarking equipment for all Military Sealift Command (MSC) and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) vessels that did not have a Military Post Office assigned.
- Sent instructions to military service and major command postal representatives regarding postmarking balloting materials for MSC and USCG vessels. MPSA also had the postmarking equipment sent to all MSC and USCG vessels at that time.
- Sent a message advising postal activities of the recommended mailing time for absentee ballots for them to be received in a timely manner.
- MPSA sent weekly reminders in the month prior to the November 2002 General Election regarding various voting issues.

Military Service postal representatives: Mr. Edward Demetzky, U.S. Navy; Mr. Robert Eichholz, U.S. Air Force; CWO5 Michael Bennett, U.S. Marine Corps; Mr. Robert Burrows/John Hall, U.S. Army; and Combatant Commander/Major Command post representatives are responsible for implementing these measures.