



H.Con.Res. 388 – Expressing the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense and the Federal Voting Assistance Program should take certain additional and timely measures to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents are provided with reasonable information on how to register to vote and vote in the 2008 general elections

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Con.Res. 388 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Roy Blunt (R-MO) on July 8, 2008. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, but was never considered.

H.Con.Res. 388 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 16, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Con.Res. 388 resolves that it is the sense of Congress that:

- It is in the interests of the United States to ensure that the Secretary of Defense and the Federal Voting Assistance Program provide members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who are eligible under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act with sufficient information regarding opportunities to register to vote and to request an absentee ballot for elections occurring in 2008, including the November 2008 general election;
- The Secretary of Defense and the Federal Voting Assistance Program must, on a monthly basis starting July 15, 2008, through the November 2008 general election, provide all eligible members of the Armed Forces and their dependents with an electronic reminder of the voter registration and absentee ballot process available under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, and, as required by Department policy, provide all members of the Armed Forces and their dependents with an electronic or paper copy of the Federal Post Card Application, along with sufficient instruction on completing and returning the application to the appropriate election official;
- State and local election officials should work with the Federal Voting Assistance Program to develop methods, consistent with privacy and security, for obtaining updated addresses and contact information, if possible, for any member of the Armed Forces or dependent who has been identified by the State or local election official as having an undeliverable ballot address;
- The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness should report to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, and the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and Senate not later than September 15, 2008, on the efforts made by the Department of Defense to--
 - educate members of the Armed Forces on the process of voter registration and absentee voting in the 2008 general election,
 - provide all eligible members of the Armed Forces and their dependents with the Federal Post Card Application to register to vote and cast absentee ballots in such election, and
 - cooperate effectively with State and local election officials in their efforts to register these individuals and distribute and collect their absentee ballots;
- States must redouble their efforts to make sure that local jurisdictions collect the mandated information for individuals who are eligible under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens



- Absentee Voting Act, and should work in partnership with the Federal Government to develop best practices (including the use of electronic means) for encouraging voting participation among members of the Armed Forces and their dependents and citizens living overseas; and
- The Department of Defense, the Federal Voting Assistance Program, the Election Assistance Commission, and State governments should examine recommendations made by the Election Assistance Commission in its September 2007 survey findings regarding the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

BACKGROUND

Congress enacted the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (P.L. 99-410) in 1986. This legislation allowed United States citizens including service members, Federal employees abroad, and private citizens abroad to vote in Federal elections via absentee ballot. Recently, there have been certain anomalies regarding the use of absentee ballots by these groups.

In the 2006 general election, less than 17 percent of the 16 million Americans eligible under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting act voted, according to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Of the 48,600 ballots cast, about 70 percent were not counted due to undeliverable addresses. The EAC is an independent Federal agency which administers Federal elections and establishing standards for State and local governments.

[Election Assistance Commission](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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