



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

900 EAST MAIN STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United States Army
Disabled American Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Korean War Veterans Association
Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the World Wars
National Association for Uniformed Services Navy Seabee Veterans of America
Non-Commissioned Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
Virginia National Guard Association
Women Marines Association*

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Position Paper 2016-08 Electronic Return of Voted Ballots by Overseas Military

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To allow for electronic return of absentee ballots by Overseas Uniformed Military voters.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - a. Overseas uniformed service personnel and their dependents often experience difficulties in casting absentee ballots due to a number of factors, including the timely return of a voted ballot.
 - b. Currently an overseas voter can electronically register and receive an absentee ballot per the Uniformed & Overseas Absentee Voter Act (UOCAVA). By Virginia Code the ballot must be returned via “snail” mail.

Election	Total Votes*	Total Absentee*	UOCAVA**
2008 – Nov. Gen.	3,752,858	506,672	14,107 (0.4% of Total Vote)
2010 – Nov. Gen.	2,214,503	106,888	1,785 (0.08% of Total Vote)
2012 – Nov. Gen.	3,896,846	447,907	12,036 (0.31% of Total Vote)
2014 – Nov. Gen.	2,194,346	123,221	Not yet available

* Per Virginia State Board of Elections – Election Results

** Ballots Submitted by Domestic & Overseas Uniformed Military (Election Assistance Commission report)

- c. SB11 passed by the 2014 General Assembly allows the State Board of Elections to form a working group to develop procedures enabling uniformed-service voters outside the United States to return voted military overseas ballots securely by electronic format.
 - d. Electronic return of the voted ballot per SB11 will not become effective unless reenacted by the 2016 Session of the General Assembly.
 - e. The State Board of Elections (SBE) indicates that implementing a system to ensure secure return of voted military-overseas ballots would have a fiscal impact, particularly with the security requirements. Actual impact will not be known until procedures have been developed and approved.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - a. The State Board of Elections has expressed confidence in developing procedures that address privacy and security concerns related to the electronic transmission, management, and counting absentee ballots from uniformed military personnel serving overseas.
 - b. General Assembly approval in 2016 is required to permit electronic return of the voted ballot from uniformed military personnel serving overseas.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly promote development, approval, and budgeting of secure procedures to permit the electronic return of absentee ballot by overseas uniformed military voters.