

## What Are Overseas and Military Ballots?

### The only way millions of people can vote.

⇒ “Overseas and military ballots” are **special absentee ballots** provided under the terms of a federal law (known by acronym UOCAVA). This law protects the voting rights of people serving in the military and people living away from the country during an election.

⇒ Special UOCAVA ballots count the same as everyone else’s. Only the way they are distributed and returned differs from normal absentee ballots. Special absentee ballots are the only practical means of voting for over four million US citizens.

⇒ Under UOCAVA, all states must provide special absentee ballots to service members who are on active duty and “absent from” their official voting residence. “Absent” can be anywhere away from their home, *in the United States OR abroad*.

- ★ Members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, NOAA and Merchant Marines may request special absentee ballots.
- ★ So can their family members who are absent from their legal voting residence.
- ★ A service member’s legal residence does not automatically change when the person is assigned to a new duty location. That means most military families do not live where they vote. They must change legal residence or vote by special absentee ballot.

⇒ States must also provide special absentee ballots to voters who are away from the United States. They may be away from the country for any reason anywhere.

⇒ Individuals can register to vote and request these ballots **NOW** at [fvap.gov](https://fvap.gov) or [votefromabroad.org](https://votefromabroad.org). States must issue ballots at least 45 days before election day. In many cases, the ballot request and the ballot submission can be done by electronic means. State rules vary. These two sites provide all the details for each state.

⇒ **YOU can help Get Out the Vote!** The most effective way is *asking people you know!* Use and share this Quick Action: <https://www.mobilize.us/buildbridges4am/event/643789/>. Visit [www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/vote-from-away](https://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/vote-from-away) for more resources.