



AUG 30 2011

Senate of Pennsylvania

August 30, 2011

TO: All Senators
FROM: Senator Robert D. Robbins *RDR*
SUBJECT: Invitation for Co-Sponsorship
Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation -- The Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act (UMOVA) -- that will make it easier for military personnel and overseas civilians to participate in State elections.

UMOVA -- drafted by the Uniform Law Commission -- provides states the ability to extend some of the accommodations given for Federal elections by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA) and its amendment, the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009 (MOVE), to military and overseas civilian voters in Federal and State elections.

My legislation has been modified specifically for the needs and challenges of Pennsylvania citizens who are abroad during an election cycle and our military personnel and their families. Among other provisions, the bill:

- covers Federal and State primary, municipal, general and special elections conducted in the Commonwealth
- allows all covered voters to use the Federal postcard application to register to vote and apply for an absentee ballot at the same time
- allows uniformed service members, their spouses and dependents and bedridden veterans to use the Federal write-in absentee ballot to register to vote, apply for an absentee ballot and vote at the same time
- provides that an application for an absentee ballot for a primary election will be considered a standing request for an absentee ballot for a special election, general election or municipal election occurring in the same calendar year as the primary
- requires the Secretary of the Commonwealth to implement an electronic free-access system by which a covered voter may determine by telephone, email or internet website whether:
 - the voter's Federal postcard application or other voter registration or absentee ballot application has been received and accepted
 - the voter's completed ballot has been received and the status of the ballot

- requires county boards of election to prepare election notices at least 90 days prior to an election, keep them updated and make them available on their publicly accessible website, if they have one
- prohibits invalidating a document submitted under the bill by a covered voter because of a voter's mistake or omission, as long as it does not prevent determining whether the covered voter is eligible to vote, or for failure to satisfy a non-substantive requirement, such as using paper or envelopes of a specified size or weight
- will apply to elections that occur after January 1, 2013

According to the Uniform Law Commission's website, six states have enacted UMOVA legislation: Colorado; Nevada; North Carolina; North Dakota; Oklahoma and Utah.

This legislation is supported by the United States Department of Defense, the Pennsylvania Department of State and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

If you wish to cosponsor this legislation, please call my office at 787-1322 or email Chris Yniguez of my staff at cyniguez@pasen.gov by September 16, 2011.