

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians¹

Section A. JUSTIFICATION

A.1. Need for Information Collection

Primary objectives. The primary objective of the *2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians* is to identify areas where the electoral process can be improved by providing an accurate picture of the absentee voting process. Additionally, the data will permit an ongoing evaluation of the extent to which recent legislative changes have been successful in removing barriers for absentee voting and will assist in identifying any remaining obstacles to voting by those populations covered by *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) post-election surveys request information to determine participation in the electoral process by those populations covered by *UOCAVA*. The information collection will help determine: 1) whether voting materials are being distributed in a timely manner and whether voting assistance is being made available; 2) the types of obstacles voters encounter when attempting to vote absentee; 3) the impact of FVAP's efforts to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee; and 4) any other problems existing for an absentee voter. FVAP will use the information to prepare a report to the President and Congress as required by the *National Defense Authorization Act*. Prior to 2010, the voting surveys were administered every four (4) years; i.e., immediately after each presidential election. Beginning in 2010, the surveys will be administered every two years, i.e., immediately after each national election. A detailed content summary for the current survey can be found in Attachment 1a. This summary highlights the relationships between the research objectives and the specific items found on the questionnaire.

Legal authorities. The President of the United States designated the Secretary of Defense to administer the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA)*, 42 USC 1973ff (Attachment 1b), and as modified by the *National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2010* (Attachment 1c). The Act permits members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine and their eligible family members and all citizens residing

outside the United States who are absent from the United States and its territories to vote in the general elections for Federal offices. The 1988 Executive Order 12642 (Attachment 1d) names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering *UOCAVA*. The Secretary of Defense in turn delegated this responsibility to the Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program in Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 1000.4, Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) (Attachment 1e), which defines the program’s responsibilities and authority.

A.2. Purpose and Use of Information

How and for what purpose information will be used. The respondents for this specific information collection are Overseas Civilians (OCs), who are U.S. citizens living abroad and not affiliated with the Federal government. As in prior survey administrations of *UOCAVA* populations, these survey data will identify areas where the electoral process can be improved by providing an accurate picture of the absentee voting process through the perspective of the OCs. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), the survey research arm of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, designed the survey questions to capture self-reported attitudes and behaviors of this population, and will manage the survey data collection for FVAP.

By whom information will be used. The sponsor of the *2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians* is the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) (OUSD[P&R]), and the users of the data will be FVAP, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), other DoD senior staff and administrators, DMDC, and the Department of State (DoS).

A.3. Improved Information Technology

To minimize respondent burden and to capitalize on computer-assisted survey administration technology, the *2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians* will be conducted entirely online. OCs will be able to complete the survey on the Web by logging onto the data collection contractor’s secure Web site. Furthermore, to capitalize on e-mail communication capability, e-mails will be sent to all OCs who are part of the “known subset

¹ At the time of the 60-day FRN, the survey was titled the *2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Citizens*. The term “Citizens” was later changed to “Civilians” to better specify this particular *UOCAVA* population.

sample” and for whom DoS has a valid e-mail address. These e-mails will explain the purpose of the survey, invite the selected OCs to participate, and describe how to access the Web site. Another group of OCs, referred to as the “convenience sample” will gain access to the survey via a number of sponsored Web sites, such as the DoS Web site, where they will be able to click on a link that will take them directly to the data collection contractor’s secure Web site. (Section B.1. defines the “known subset sample” and the “convenience sample” in more detail and describes the procedural and methodological differences between the two.)

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

There is no other Federal agency tasked with collecting information specific to all the populations covered by *UOCAVA* and designed to evaluate and report on FVAP’s efforts to simplify the process of voting absentee. The Secretary of Defense, as the “Presidential designee” under 42 USC 1973ff, designated the Director of FVAP to administer and oversee the Federal responsibilities of the Act. Presently, the only information of a similar nature available is information collected by FVAP from surveys of prior elections, with 2008 the most recent federal election. This information is no longer current and cannot be used to extrapolate to the upcoming federal election. Without current information, FVAP cannot perform its responsibilities under the Act.

A.5. Methods Used to Minimize Burden on Small Entities

The survey respondents for this data collection are the OCs. No data collection is being conducted with other businesses or establishments.

A.6. Consequences of Not Collecting the Information

The *UOCAVA* requires a statistical analysis of absentee voter participation, which includes uniformed services and overseas nonmilitary populations. To obtain the required information under *UOCAVA* to conduct this analysis, surveys need to be administered to OCs. FVAP is then required to prepare a report to Congress no later than the end of the year after a federal election. If surveys were not administered, the DoD would not be in compliance with the law.

A.7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. This collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with guidelines contained in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

A.8. Agency 60-Day Federal Register Notice and Consultations Outside the Agency

Received comments. An agency 60-Day Federal Notice was published in Vol. 75, No. 25, Monday, February 8, 2010, Federal Register, pages 6184-6185, as required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d). A copy of the 60-Day Federal Notice is included in Attachment 2a. No public comments were received in response to the notice. In addition, FVAP corresponds regularly with interested citizens and State and local government officials on UOCAVA-related concerns, and these discussions informed the survey content.

Consultants and coordinations.

DMDC statisticians and FVAP staff consulted with DoS on matters pertaining to the administrative database maintained by DoS in order to identify the characteristics of the survey population by which to make the sample selection.

Coordinations were obtained from Ms. Cindy Allard, OSD/JS Privacy Office, WHS/ESD, 703.588.2386 (Attachment 2b), and Ms. Andrea Zucker, Exempt Determination Official for the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Program Integration), Human Research Protection Program, DHRA, 703.696.7178 (Attachment 2c).

A.9. Payments to Respondents

No payments or gifts will be provided to OCs for completing the survey.

A.10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The information collection does not ask respondents to submit propriety, trade secret, or confidential information to DoD. Though DMDC cannot promise confidentiality to this population, respondents will be told that the information they provide will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

A.11. Sensitive Questions

The data collection instrument contains no questions of a sensitive nature. The survey will be non-intrusive and will make it clear that cooperation is voluntary and that responses will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Further procedural and methodological details are provided in Section B.2.

A.12. Estimates of Annual Response Burden and Labor Cost for Hour Burden to the Respondent for Collection of Information.

Response burden.

Total annual respondents:	16,924	Assumes .15 completion rate
Frequency of response:	1	
Total annual responses:	16,924	
Burden per response:	30	Minutes on average
Total burden minutes:	507,720	
Total burden hours:	8,462	

Explanation of how response burden was estimated.

Twenty-five percent of the population (N = 451,312) will be sampled for a sample size (n) of 112,828. The estimated number of respondents is based on the sample size by the expected response rate of 15% ($112,828 * 0.15 = 16,924$). The estimated burden per response (30 minutes) is based on the burden for previous surveys.

Labor cost to respondent.

Total annual respondents:	16,924	Assumes .15 completion rate
Frequency of response:	1	
Total annual responses:	16,924	
Burden per response:	30	Minutes on average
Average cost per response:	\$9.96	\$19.92 *.50 (30 minutes on average × hourly rate)
Total cost:	\$168,563	Average cost per response (\$9.96) × expected number of responses (16,924)

Explanation of how labor cost to respondent was estimated.

The estimated hourly wage used to calculate the average cost per response is the 2010 GS-9/1 hourly rate of \$19.92 (excluding any locality adjustment). While there is no clear way to determine estimated annual earnings for the population of interest (which is most likely quite varied in occupation and is residing in a large number of countries), a GS-9/1 comprises roughly a mid-range salary.

A.13. Estimates of Other Cost Burden for the Respondent for Collection of Information.

Total capital and start-up cost. There are no capital/startup costs.

Operation and maintenance cost. There are no operation and maintenance costs. No outside resources, consultations, or record retrieval are required to answer the survey questions.

A.14. Estimates of Cost to the Federal Government.

a. DMDC Staffing Costs

GS Grade/Step	Annual Rate	25% Fringe	Monthly	FTE Months	Cost
12/1	\$74,872	\$93,590	\$7,799	5	\$38,995
13/1	\$89,033	\$111,291	\$9,274	4	\$37,097
14/1	\$105,211	\$131,514	\$10,959	4	\$43,836
15/1	\$123,758	\$154,698	\$12,891	3	\$38,674
Total Cost					\$158,602

b. Explanation of How Cost was Estimated. Federal labor costs were estimated using the GS Salary Table for 2010-DCB which includes a locality payment of 24.22% for the Washington, Baltimore, and Northern Virginia area. An additional estimated 25% fringe benefit cost was added based on research available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.²

² An estimate of 25% as the cost of fringe benefits was taken from a review of two papers available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Website; 1) *Report on the American Workforce, U.S. Department of Labor, Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, 2001*, and, 2) "The Growth of fringe benefits: implications for social security" by Yung-Ping Chen.

c. Additional Costs

Survey contractor operations and maintenance cost \$155,914

(Estimated costs include contractor labor to produce Web-based survey, all data collection costs, creation of data files and supporting documentation, and data storage.)

On-site contractor support costs \$182,000

(Estimated costs for on-site support contract are based on negotiated rates for similar services.)

Government staffing costs \$158,602

(Includes sampling and weighting tasks, analysis of basic data set, creation of tab volume, writing statistical methods reports, contractor technical oversight, contract administration, consults with FVAP and the Department of State, preparation of the final internal documents.)

Total Costs \$496,516

A.15. Changes in Burden

Change in burden is due to re-estimation of the number of respondents. In particular to the OC survey, a purposive sampling technique was used in 2008, but the 2010 survey effort will be a random sample of a known subset. Furthermore, the 2010 survey also includes a convenience sample.

A.16. Published Reports and Project Schedule

Published reports. There are currently no plans to publish the results outside the DoD.

Project schedule.

Activity:	Anticipated Date:
Data collection begins	November 3, 2010
Data collection ends	January 11, 2011
Publish methods report	March 10, 2011
Post reports to FVAP Web site	July 1, 2011
Post tabulations to FVAP Web site	June 20, 2011
Post briefings to FVAP Web site	August 23, 2011

A.17. Approval Not to Display Expiration Date

This approval is not being requested.

A.18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

No exceptions to the Certification Statement are being requested.

Section B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

B.1. Description of Potential Respondents

Target population. Under *UOCAVA*, FVAP will conduct a post-election survey of OCs. DMDC will conduct the survey construction and data collection process. The population of interest for the *2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians* consists of all American citizens living overseas, excluding federal civilian employees and members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Although informal estimates of this population range from five to seven million, neither the Government nor business maintains a registry or precise count of overseas American civilians.

Because DoD does not have a sampling frame for this population, DMDC will not be able to conduct a reasonably budgeted, statistically valid survey of the full target population (i.e., statistically valid area samples are possible but clearly cost prohibitive). Instead, DMDC plans to use results from the combination of (1) a statistically valid survey of a known and identifiable subset of this population (“known subset sample”) and (2) a convenience sample designed for accessibility by the full target population (“convenience sample”). Since each of these surveys has limitations, the 2010 survey incorporates a two-survey methods test to determine whether estimates for the overseas civilian populations can be successfully calculated.

Known subset sample. The Department of State maintains a registry of overseas American civilians who register with an embassy. The DoS has slightly more than two million registries on their records. In 2008, Westat (on behalf of DMDC) attempted to sample from this population and conduct a Web and a paper-and-pen survey. These efforts resulted in a 5.3% response rate (see Table 1 below for more detail). DMDC and FVAP consider the 2008 Survey of Overseas Civilians to have failed due to extremely low response rates.

Table 1. 2008 - *Sample Size by Case Disposition Categories*

Case Disposition Category and (Code Value)	Sample Size
Total	10,687
Frame Ineligible	6
Ineligible Response	
Self/Proxy-report (2)	861
Survey Self report (3)	121
Eligible Response	
Complete (4)	577
Incomplete (5)	34
Unknown eligibility	5
Refused/Deployed/Other (8)	3
Postal Non-Delivery (10)	2,343
Non-respondents (11)	6,737

Over 20% of the 2008 surveys never reached their intended recipient due to postal non-delivery. Since postal mailings to most countries still encounter large delays and failed deliveries, and since the postal mailing process was very burdensome to the DoS, the *2010 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians* will eliminate the paper-and-pen component.

For 2010, DoS will create the sampling frame from embassy and consulate registration records of civilians living or traveling overseas who voluntarily register either online (through the Internet Based Registration System) or in-person (with a U.S. embassy or consulate in the overseas country). Registration records are generally used only to reach Americans in case of an emergency or to notify them of a security threat against U.S. civilians in the country where they are living. Unlike the 2008 survey, DoS has attempted to limit the ‘registration’ frame to American civilians, adults, civilians with email address, and civilians on planned long-term stays (e.g., people traveling abroad for a week would be considered ineligible for this data collection effort and would not be included on the survey frame). These restrictions in the sampling frame should reduce the 65 percent ineligibility rate from the 2008 survey, where these restrictions were not implemented due to timing and workload issues. The restricted registrations are more likely to be recent and contain better contact information. Specifically, DMDC plans to select a

systematic sample of 25 percent of the 451,312 records on DoS's registration file (total number or registrants 18 years or older as of November 2, 2010 with an email address), yielding a sample size of 112,828. Prior to selecting the sample, the DoS will sort the file by country of registration. This sampling plan creates a proportional allocation of the sample to each country.

The total sample size (~112,000) was based upon precision requirements for the key reporting domain, country. The precision goal was a confidence interval of ± 5 percentage points at the 95% precision level. To achieve this level of precision, a total of approximately 400 completed surveys were needed for each country. Because DMDC has never used this exact frame before, some assumptions were required during sampling. Due to the restrictions in the frame, DMDC assumed that eligibility and contact rates would be much higher than in 2008, about 75 percent each, and that the cooperation rate overall would be approximately 25 percent. This results in about a 15 percent overall response rate and requires a sample of about 2,700 overseas civilians to produce 400 completed surveys in each country where estimates are desired. The goal is to produce estimates for the 30 to 40 largest countries (by registered civilians) and an estimate for all other countries within each of five world regions (Africa, East Asia/Pacific, Europe, Northeast and South Central Asia, and Western Hemisphere).

DoS registration records have the following limitations as a sampling frame for the survey:

1. Registration records have limited coverage of overseas civilians because many overseas civilians do not register.
2. Registration coverage varies by geographic region (e.g., relatively complete coverage in Africa and far less complete coverage in European countries or Canada).
3. Although DoS attempted to clean their registries for DMDC's survey purposes, the registration records still may include persons not eligible for the current survey. For example, the registries may include the names of minors, non-civilians, and persons no longer living overseas who did not notify the embassy that they had returned to the United States.
4. Registration records contain different types of contact information. Some contain only postal addresses. E-mail addresses are available for only a subset of registrants because the DoS did not begin collecting that information for U.S. citizen registrants until 2000.

Despite these known limitations, the registration lists are considered the best source for building a sample frame and drawing a probability sample of overseas adult Americans. The frame, then, was said to include (but is not restricted to) overseas adult American civilians who registered at an embassy or consulate. Registration information collected by the DoS (i.e., name and address) is protected by the Privacy Act and not available to DMDC or its data collection contractor. As a result, all processing of information, frame assembly, sample selection, and respondent emailing will be performed exclusively by the DoS.

Convenience sample. In addition to the aforementioned procedural difficulties associated with sampling the overseas civilian population, estimates from the ‘registered’ subset of the population are likely biased. Overseas civilians who are registered with their embassy or consulate (hereafter written as “embassy”) are likely very different from civilians who do not register. For example, registered civilians may have greater attachment to the United States and vote at higher rates than those not registered. This issue is further compounded by the fact that for the planned 2010 statistical sample, DMDC will sample from an even smaller subset than the 2008 survey: only overseas American civilians with email addresses on file. Civilians with email addresses may be very different from those without email addresses. For example, civilians with email may have registered more recently, be more technologically oriented, younger, or have other characteristics related to completing a Web survey, using the Web to order Federal Postcard Applications (FPCA) or using FVAP’s Web site. Due to the potentially severe coverage bias, it is expected that a survey alone of this subset of the population has little utility for making estimates representing overseas civilians. Thus, in addition to the previously described “known subset” sample, DMDC will also conduct a convenience sample.

A suitable use for estimates from this convenience sample could be for trending purposes. If the survey can produce cross-sectional estimates showing that a higher percentage of respondents than the prior period accessed FVAP’s Website, rated it positively, or received voting help from the embassy, FVAP may be confident that their programs are working for this population even if the underlying survey estimates are biased. However, an equally important use of these survey data is to assess the data quality from the proposed convenience sample that is accessible to all overseas civilians with Web access, a much larger subset of the overseas population. Convenience samples have strong, well-documented limitations with the largest negative aspect being an inability to assess or correct for nonresponse bias. The self-selected

sample may have very different characteristics from the target population, and because little is known about the respondents (and nonrespondents), results from the survey can be misleading.

DMDC's goal is to ask two questions of the convenience sample to create estimates for the same population subset as the statistical sample. These questions are: (1) "On November 2, 2010, were you registered with the embassy or consulate in this country?" and (2) "Did you provide an email address to the embassy or consulate where you registered?" From the answers to these two questions, we can create estimates from the convenience sample for the following three distinct subsets of overseas Americans: (1) Overseas civilians not registered with an embassy, (2) Overseas civilians registered with an embassy but do not have an email address on file, and (3) Overseas civilians registered with an embassy, and have an email address on file.

From the convenience sample, we will produce estimates for population number three, or the same subset of the population covered by the statistical sample (i.e., those registered with an embassy and have an email address on file). If both surveys produce similar estimates for this population, FVAP may consider the estimates from the convenience sample for populations 1 and 2 sufficient for policy purposes. However, if the statistical sample and the convenience sample produce very different estimates, it can be concluded that the convenience sample estimates are biased due to self-selection. However, even though biased, these estimates again may have some utility for assessing trends in the data.

B.2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

Known subset sample recruitment and data collection procedures. Survey administration will begin on November 03, 2010, the day after the national election, and will last approximately six (6) weeks. Because mailing notification letters and paper survey forms internationally was expensive and fraught with problems in 2008, survey members will be contacted only by email for the 2010 administration. The DoS could not share protected contact information (e.g., registrant names, postal addresses, and e-mail addresses) with other members of the research team. Consequently, all mailing operations (e-mail) will be performed at the DoS office in Washington, DC.

An announcement e-mail will be sent on November 03, 2010 informing the OCs that data collection has started and inviting them to participate (Attachment 3a). Throughout the field period, four follow-up thank you/reminder e-mails (Attachment 3b) will be sent by DoS. These

communications remind sampled individuals of the survey and ask them to complete/submit the Web-based. Thank you/reminders will be sent to all sample members because the DoS email system does not allow the DoD to identify who has responded to the survey. All emails will be under the signature of Janice Jacobs, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs. The survey invitations and thank you/reminders include a hyperlink to the survey Web site and a general (i.e., non-unique) Ticket Number for logging on to the survey. Once a survey participant logs on with the general Ticket Number and opens the Welcome screen, the program will generate a unique Ticket Number. The respondent will be instructed to keep a record of their assigned, unique ticket number in the event they leave the survey before completing/submitted it and wish to return at a later time. In that case, the respondent will be required to enter their unique Ticket Number to get back into the survey.

Data collection. Data collection for the known subset sample will be Web only. Though the final Web-based survey instrument has not yet been programmed, the content will be the same as that presented in Attachment 4a. The survey includes a few initial screening questions to ensure eligibility. For example, if Q. 1 (“Were you a U.S. citizen on November 2, 2010?”) or Q. 4 (“On November 2, 2010, did you live outside the U.S.?”) is answered “No,” or if respondents indicate at Q. 2 they are “17 years of age or younger,” they are skipped to the end of the survey.

When respondents log on to the Web site using the general Ticket number to complete the on-line instrument, they will be directed to a set of Web screens, starting with the “Welcome” screen (Attachment 5a). From there they can view the “Frequently Asked Questions” screen (Attachment 5b) and the “Security Protection Advisory”³ screen (Attachment 5c). The Advisory for the survey program informs visitors to the Web site that no information on the person's computer or Internet connection is collected in a way it can be associated with the person or the survey responses. Respondents are then directed to the “Agency Disclosure Notice” (ADN) and the “Privacy Advisory Statement and Informed Consent Information” screen (Attachment 5d). This screen includes the instruction "Click 'Continue' if you agree to do the survey" and informed consent is indicated by clicking the "Continue" button and answering the

³ Because the data are collected on a Web site, the Web site is required to include Security Protection Advisory information according to the *Office of the Secretary of Defense Policy for Establishing and Maintaining a Publicly Accessible Department of Defense Web Information Service* (dated July 18, 1997; updated January 9, 1998).

survey questions. The data collection procedures are not expected to involve any risk to participants. Neither names nor email addresses are provided to DMDC or to DMDC's data collection contractor by DoS, and it will not be possible to keep a record of who responded to the survey and who did not.

The data collection contractor converts raw data files to SAS datasets according to specifications written by DMDC. Datasets are then transmitted to DMDC via secure file transfer protocol. DMDC then creates a report for FVAP of the survey responses in subgroup categories and percentages (weighted to reflect the population). FVAP then further analyzes the data and prepares a report to the President and the Congress.

Convenience sample recruitment and data collection procedures. Recruitment of OCs to participate in the survey as part of the convenience sample is described in Section B.4 below. However, once the survey participants log onto the data collection contractor's secure survey Web site, they will go through the same Ticket Numbering and data collection procedures as other OC survey participants. The wording of the screens they will open and view ("Welcome" screen [Attachment 6a], "Security Protection Advisory" screen [Attachment 6b], "Agency Disclosure Notice/Privacy Advisory Statement and Informed Consent Information" screen [Attachment 6c], "Frequently Asked Questions" screen [Attachment 6d]) will vary only slightly from the comparable screens viewed by the OCs participating as part of the "known subset" sample. The survey itself is identical.

The set of Ticket Numbers the data collection contractor's program creates for those survey participants who are part of the convenience sample will systematically vary from those the program creates for the survey participants who are part of the "known subset" sample. The program is able to make this differentiation because it will be able to determine if the respondent logged onto the survey via an external Web site (convenience sample) or logged on to the survey directly via the contractor's link. See Section B. 3 (***Encouraging response***). In this manner, DMDC will be able to track the number of completed surveys for each of the two samples, and the contractor will be able to create two separate databases.

Data security. The current survey does not collect or use personally identifiable information and data are not retrieved by personal identifier. Therefore, the information collected is not subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. DMDC will report only aggregate data in the form of statistical summaries.

DMDC's and the data collection contractor's network sites are secure and password protected. Security is strictly enabled by using physical and software access restrictions. All servers are physically located in locked rooms with access permitted only to Technical Services staff through the use of a security card system. Access to the network is allowed only through a login account and password. In addition, employees use password protected screen savers at workstations to protect their systems while they are away from their desks. At DMDC, the network is accessed through the use of Common Access Card (CAC) readers and utilizes Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) security. Logging on to the network requires both physical possession of the CAC and a separately issued Personal Identification Number. All computer systems comply with current Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) security standards.

The survey contractor makes daily backup tapes that are stored for five (5) years in fire proof vaults located within a security-card protected area, and all provisions dealing with the protection of human subjects and data security are in force for as long as the contractor retains any protected data.

Weighting. The 2008 survey results were not weighted due to poor response rates and concerns about nonresponse bias (the survey estimates were not used). DMDC will weight (post-stratify) the "known subset" sample survey by country of registration, age of registration (i.e., when the frame member registered), and gender. The results of this survey, as opposed to the convenience sample survey, will generalize to Americans living overseas who are registered with an embassy and have an email address on file. The survey results do not generalize to all American overseas civilians. Although the survey results do not generalize to all American Overseas civilians, we may create an additional research set of weights where a key post-stratification variable is the estimated (by DoS) proportion of overseas civilians in foreign countries, rather than counts of registered civilians. For the convenience sample, we plan to post-stratify by the same set of variables as the "known subset" survey.

Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling. No unusual problems that would require specialized sampling are anticipated.

Use of periodic data collection cycles to reduce burden. This request is for a single collection, and therefore it cannot be reduced further.

B.3. Non-response, Maximization to Response Rates, and Accuracy and Reliability

Encouraging response. To maximize response rates for the OCs who comprise the “known subset survey,” an announcement e-mail will be sent the day after Election Day (Wednesday, November 03, 2010), explaining the survey and informing the OCs data collection has started. Throughout the approximate 10-week field period, the OCs will be sent four (4) reminder e-mails thanking those who have already responded, and encouraging non-respondents to log onto the Web site and complete the survey.

To reach out to, and to encourage participation from, OCs who would comprise the convenience sample, a number of Web sites will be selected, in consultation with FVAP and DoS, that may be frequented by U.S. civilians living outside the United States; e.g., the DoS Web site, Websites of the individual embassies, FVAP’s Web site, etc. Many of the individual embassies’ Web sites are currently running a short announcement, with FVAP’s logo, reminding U.S. civilians of the Federal mid-term general elections and hosting a link to FVAP. This will serve as the model for announcing the OC survey, encouraging participation, and providing a link to the data collection contractor’s secure survey Web site. Of course, the more Web sites that announce the survey, the more potential convenience sample completes will be collected. DMDC will work with FVAP and DoS to identify as many Web sites as is feasible. The timing of the field period for the convenience sample will mirror as closely as possible that of the known subset sample, but no Web site will post the announcement of the survey prior to the day of the election.

Analysis of survey non-response. Both DMDC and OMB are concerned with general declining response rates in the survey industry. To address this concern, OMB issued standards and guidelines for federal statistical surveys requiring that, for any survey with a response rate below 80 percent, survey agencies conduct a non-response analysis. Due to the DoD’s experience surveying this very difficult population in 2008, we expect high levels of survey nonresponse in 2010. Data from the DoS on registries of Overseas Civilians is privacy act protected, and DoS can only provide limited aggregated data that will assist the DoD with survey weighting. To limit the impact of survey nonresponse on estimates from this voting survey, the DoD will weight the survey data using direct post-stratification to frame counts provided by DoS. The DoD has requested from the DoS sample frame counts by region (Africa, East Asia/Pacific, Europe, Northeast and South Central Asia, and Western Hemisphere), country, gender, age of registration (i.e., when the frame member registered). The DoD will analyze these data to determine whether

sample members from these subgroups respond at different rates to the email-contact survey, and whether respondents differ on key variables of interest (e.g., voting behavior).

B.4. Tests of Procedures

DMDC utilizes best practices in its design of Web-based surveys (e.g., visual presentation of questions and response options, usability and interactive elements, use of color, font style and size, and screen layout). These features of Web-based data collection, in addition to automated skip logic, serve to ease the burden on the respondents, increase data quality, and minimize response error. Similarly, and pertinent to the “known subset” sample, DMDC has incorporated a number of randomized experiments into its surveys over the past several years testing such conditions as number and wording of letters and emails, timing of respondent contacts, presence or absence of a brochure, sponsorship, and subject line text. Because of these experiments, DMDC has developed field procedures grounded in experience and empirical findings. In addition to these tests and experiments, DMDC conducted the *2008 Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Civilians* and has made revisions to the survey content and format as a result.

DMDC establishes a schedule of deliverables and the operations contractor provides reports on progress according to the schedule. DMDC ensures the sample is statistically sound, representative, and consistent with past reports. The operations contractor performs quality control checks on assembly of survey packages, address lists and data input.

B.5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Consulting and/or Analyzing Data

FVAP Principal Investigators: Robert Carey
Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program
W: 703-588-8118
C: 703-485-5022
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