

## CONTENT SUMMARY OF 2010 LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIAL (LEO) SURVEY

- **General** - *The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* requires the Department to annually determine the registration and participation rates for overseas civilians and uniformed service members. The LEO survey is an integral instrument for the Department in obtaining and analyzing this election data. For the 2008 Post Election Survey, the LEO survey became the primary instrument for determining the voting participation of overseas civilians because of low response rate to the overseas civilian survey made that survey statistically invalid. Data from the LEO survey will be used to assess and improve FVAP programs that support *UOCAVA* voter accessibility and participation in elections for federal office.

In collecting this data from the Local Election Officials, the Department is attempting to determine: 1) the correlation between jurisdictional size and *UOCAVA* population 2) voting success and participation rates for *UOCAVA* citizens 3) where in the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process does failure occur and what causes this failure. In order to ensure that sound decisions are made regarding *UOCAVA* policy and to determine where in the voting process failure lies, the Department has requested specific numerical election data from LEOs. It is the Department's belief that the requested data is available from the election jurisdictions, as required by law, in some form. For example, the smaller jurisdictions may have totals for *UOCAVA* citizens, but may not have the totals segmented by Military and overseas civilians as requested in the survey. Further, it is the Department's belief that all the requested data would be available from the larger election jurisdictions, where the majority of the *UOCAVA* population is believed to reside. Most of the requested data should be readily available from the LEOs, since it is required to be reported to other governmental agencies such as the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and the respective State Boards of Election.

- **Voter Registration and Turnout** - These items (#1-4) are used to determine the size of the local election jurisdiction by total registered voters and total registered *UOCAVA* voters, as well as these voters who participated in the 2010 general election. The data requested in items #1-4 is readily available from LEOs. While past LEO surveys have measured the size of the jurisdiction, they have not measured the *UOCAVA* population within the jurisdiction. It is hypothesized that the majority of *UOCAVA* citizens may reside in the larger election jurisdictions. If this hypothesis is proved valid, in the future it may not be necessary to survey all of the approximately 7,000 election jurisdictions in order to achieve a statistically valid conclusions regarding *UOCAVA* voting behavior.
- **Federal Post Card Applications (FPCAs)** - These items (#5-11) request specific information from the LEO on the processing of FPCAs. The total number of FPCAs that were received between 1/1/2010 and the State election deadline and of this total, the number of FPCAs which were successfully and unsuccessfully processed. Of the FPCAs which were unsuccessfully processed, the reason why the FPCA was rejected. Past surveys have requested this information as a frequency of response question and not for specific numerical statistics. It is our current opinion that frequency of response does not provide the valid statistics on which to base policy decisions. Responses to these questions will identify the specific problems areas and will assist in developing policies and procedures which promote higher FPCA processing success rates.

- **Non Federal FPCA Absentee Ballot Requests** - These items (#12-18) attempt to capture the same data detailed above for the FPCA except these are for *UOCAVA* citizens who did not use the FPCA to register and/or request an absentee ballot.
- **Transmission of Regular *UOCAVA* Absentee Ballots** - One of the largest obstacles to successful absentee voting for *UOCAVA* citizens is ballot transit time. In this case, are the LEOs sending their ballots early enough for *UOCAVA* voters to receive, vote and return, and successfully cast their absentee ballot (#20, #21)? A common complaint among LEOs is that it's not the absentee ballots that are sent out on the initial send out date that pose the transit problem, but it's the absentee ballot requests that are received by the LEO after the initial ballot send out date and arrive too late to the voter because the ballot request was received too late by the LEO from the voter. Questions #23, #24 #29, #30, #34, #35, #41, # 42, #45, #46 will analyze this issue. Many States are providing voters with the option of requesting and returning their ballot by fax, email and other methods in addition to the traditional by- mail process. Questions #25 and #31 will analyze the methods by which *UOCAVA* voters request and return their ballots from the LEOs. Undeliverable ballots, (ballots addressed to the incorrect address) continue to be a major problem for *UOCAVA* voters, particularly highly mobile Military voters (# 26). Data supplied on undeliverable ballots will determine the effectiveness of procedures initiated to ameliorate this problem. Undeliverable ballots are analyzed as a percentage of transmitted ballots.
- **Receipt of Regular *UOCAVA* Absentee Ballots** - Items #27-28 request the total number of *UOCAVA* absentee ballots returned to the LEO. To determine voter success rates, this number is analyzed as a percentage of transmitted ballots.
- **Rejection of Regular *UOCAVA* Absentee Ballots** - In an attempt to determine where the absentee voting process fails, these items will collect specific numerical data on why absentee ballots were rejected. In previous surveys, specific numeric data was not requested and this was a frequency of response question. It is the opinion of the Department that this data is readily available from the LEOs since States require that jurisdictions keep detailed data on rejected ballots. Question # 33 will determine of the rejected regular absentee ballots, how many were rejected because they were received after State deadline for ballot receipt. Question # 36 will determine if the mode of ballot transmission has an effect on ballot acceptance and rejection rates. For example, do emailed ballots have a lower rejection rate than mailed ballots? Rejected ballots by mode of transmission will be analyzed as a percentage of the same mode of transmission for returned ballots. Since ballots can be rejected for various reasons, items #37, #38, #39 will correlate ballot rejection and mode of transmission.
- **Regular *UOCAVA* Absentee Ballots Submitted for Counting and Counted** - Item # 43 and 47 will determine if the mode of transmission affects the number of ballots submitted for counting and counted ballots. For example, do emailed ballots have a greater chance of being submitted for counting than mailed ballots? Ballots submitted for counting will be analyzed as a percentage of the same mode of transmission as returned ballots, while counted ballots will be analyzed as a percentage of the submitted ballots by the same mode of transmission.
- **Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWABs)** - To date there has been no definitive statistics on the reasons why FWABs are rejected. The EAC requires States to report data on the number of FWABs received, submitted for counting, counted and rejected,

but not the reasons for rejection. For example, FWABs are rejected because the voter submitted the regular absentee ballot and the LEO submitted that absentee ballot for counting in lieu of the FWAB. Because only data is available on the number of rejected FWABs, policy makers will examine only this number and erroneously conclude that all these *UOCAVA* voters have been disenfranchised. Questions #48-53 request specific numerical data on the number of FWABs returned, rejected, submitted for counting, counted and the reason for the rejection.

- **Assessment of the Absentee Voting Process** - Items # 54-56 will determine how satisfied/dissatisfied the LEO is with each stage of the absentee voting process and where the process needs improvements in future elections. Responses will assist in targeting specific areas in the absentee voting process for more detailed emphasis and analysis.
- **Federal Voting Assistance Programs (FVAP)** - FVAP provides a variety of programs to assist LEOs in the performance of their duties to support *UOCAVA* voters. These programs include a toll free fax/email conversion service, a toll free call center, the FVAP website, and an address look up service for FVAP to assist LEOs determining the correct current addresses of Active Duty Military Members. Items #57- 72 ask a variety of questions regarding these FVAP programs. These questions involve awareness and use of the programs, satisfaction/dissatisfaction inquiries, and will determine why the LEO did not use the FVAP programs. Response data will be used to analyze the existing programs and to determine those programs most responsive to LEO needs.
- **Training** - Items #74-75 will determine if the LEO desires any additional training in *UOCAVA* laws and procedures in addition to those furnished by their respective Election Boards and Officials and if requested, the type of training desired. If needed and desired, FVAP could provide supplemental *UOCAVA* training to LEOs.