

Warden Message – U.S. Embassy, Quito, Ecuador

Voting information for U.S. citizens

The U.S. Embassy in Quito wishes to advise U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Ecuador of several important voting-related issues.

1. NEW YORK TO HOLD A SPECIAL ELECTION FOR CONGRESS – MAY 24, 2011

On Tuesday, May 24, 2011, New York will hold a special election for the 26th Congressional District, to fill the seat vacated by Representative Christopher J. Lee. The 26th Congressional District includes the following counties: Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming.

To determine if your legal residence is in the 26th Congressional District, go to: <http://fvap.gov/reference/about-elect-officials/index.html>, and then on to: “United States House of Representatives.”

2. WEST VIRGINIA TO HOLD SPECIAL ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR

On Saturday, May 14, 2011, West Virginia will hold a special primary election for Governor to fulfill the unexpired term, through January 13, 2013. The vacancy was created when former Governor Joe Manchin won election to the United States Senate. This is a statewide primary election, however only the Democratic and Republican parties have chosen a primary as their method of candidate selection. The Mountain Party has chosen to hold a convention to select a candidate.

Two West Virginia Counties, Harrison and Upshur, will have local (non-partisan) questions on the ballot.

- Voters registered with the Democratic Party may request a Democratic ballot only.
- Voters registered with the Republican Party may request a Republican ballot only.
- Voters registered with the Mountain Party may request a non-partisan ballot in Harrison and Upshur counties only. The remaining 53 counties will not have a ballot for Mountain Party voters.
- Voters not registered with one of the three major parties (Republican, Democratic, or Mountain) may request a major party ballot or a non-partisan ballot, where available. Please indicate the party's ballot you are requesting in Box 6 of the FPCA.

3. FVAP RELEASES 2011 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES TO BENEFIT MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

Bob Carey, Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), unveiled the 2011 Legislative Initiatives, wherein he urged States to “simplify their existing complex patchwork of regulations and procedures governing the uniformed services and overseas voters, by adopting a uniform voting process for all States and territories, in federal, state and local elections.”

Foremost this year is the recommendation by the Uniformed Law Commission for more uniformity and standardization of state voting laws for Uniformed Services, their spouses, and overseas voters, which would substantially ease the burden of compliance, improve voter success, and help reduce the variation in terms and procedures between States. FVAP joined the National Association of Secretaries of State, the National Association of State Election Directors, and many other military and overseas voting stakeholders in advising the Uniform Law Commission’s drafting committee on the Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act (UMOVA).

In addition, despite improvements in military and overseas voting successes brought about by changes in States’ laws, 2010 preliminary data shows that military and overseas voters still face greater difficulties in successfully casting a ballot than does the general population. Late delivery and the non-return of ballots continue to be the leading causes of failure for a good part of that population.

FVAP continues to make recommendations for legislative changes to ensure that these citizens can vote at the same rate of success as local absentee voters. Yesterday, Mr. Carey announced the Legislative Initiatives in letters sent to each of the 55 chief State or territory election officers, as well as to the State’s legislative leadership.

Federal law requires that ballots be sent to absentee voters 45 days prior to an election to provide adequate time for voters to receive, vote and return ballots. FVAP recommends States allow for the expanded use of email and online transmission for all election materials throughout the entire absentee voting process, thereby supplementing fax and postal mail, where possible.

FVAP further recommends that State law permit uniformed services and overseas voters be authorized to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) to vote in general, primary, special and runoff elections for Federal, State and local offices. Moreover, it recommends that the FWAB be accepted simultaneously as a voter registration application, an absentee ballot request and as an absentee ballot, so as to allow this highly mobile population to participate in elections far in advance of deployment, reassignment or a move.

Many U.S. citizens, who have never resided in a U.S. State or territory, are voting age children of U.S. citizens and not entitled to vote under many current State laws. FVAP urges that these U.S. citizens, who pay taxes and apply for selective service, be allowed to vote in elections for State Federal offices in the State in which either parent is eligible to vote, under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

All letters and recommendations can be found on the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov/reference/laws/state-initiatives.html>.

FVAP looks forward to working with State election officials and legislators to ensure that every UOCAVA citizen is able to successfully exercise their right to vote.

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Americans living or traveling in Ecuador are encouraged to enroll with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate in order to obtain updated information on travel and security within Ecuador through the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

U.S. citizens should consult the [Country Specific Information](#) for Ecuador and the latest Travel Alerts and Warnings and Worldwide Caution at the [Department's website](#). Updated information on travel and security in Ecuador may also be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States or by calling 1-202-501-4444 outside the United States.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito is located at Avigiras E12-170 y Eloy Alfaro. The telephone number for American Citizen Service (ACS) inquiries is (011 593-2) 398-5000. Within the same city use the last seven digits. Add the city code for intercity telephone calls. Public call-in hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. and Friday 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. For after-hours emergencies, contact the Embassy at (011 593-2) 398-5200. Appointments for ACS are available through our [website](#).

The [U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil](#) is located at the corner of Avenida 9 de Octubre and Garcia Moreno (near the Hotel Oro Verde); telephone (011-593-4) 232-3570 during business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or 232-1152 for after-hours emergencies.

Anyone can follow the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador through the [Embassy website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).