

## U.S. Consulate General Shanghai

Welcome to the November newsletter! Here are this month's topics:

### New Topics:

- Upcoming Holidays, Other Closures and Changes of Open Hours
- Voting Information for the 2008 Primary and General Elections
- SSN Needed To Add More Passport Pages
- Register With The Local Police Within 24 Hours of Arrival

### Continuing Topics of Interest:

- Notarized Consent for Passport Services for Minors Under 14
- About The Filing of I-130 Applications

### Upcoming Holidays, Other Closures and Changes of Open Hours

December 18, Tuesday OPEN from 8-11:30am and 1:30-3:30pm

The American Citizen Services Unit will be closed on the following days:

December 20, Thursday In-Service Day

December 25, Tuesday Christmas Day

### Voting Information for the 2008 Primary and General Elections

This is a reminder that in just a couple of months we will be entering the U.S. presidential and state primary season. Five primaries are currently slated for January, another 20 are scheduled for February, and the rest take place from early March through early October. Registration for the first primary (the District of Columbia) closes December 10, 2007. We encourage you to act now so that your opinion is heard – not only in the November 2008 presidential and general elections, but also in the presidential primary and state primary elections! The official U.S. Government website for overseas absentee voting assistance is the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

Generally, all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who are or will be residing outside the United States during an election period are eligible to vote absentee in any election for Federal office. This includes primary, run-off, and special elections that occur throughout the year, as well as the general election in November 2008. Some states allow overseas voters to vote in elections for state and local offices, and for state and local referendums.

Voting eligibility and residency requirements are determined by the various U.S. states, and are available on-line at <http://fvap.gov/pubs/vag.html>. Your legal state of residence for voting purposes is the state where you last resided immediately prior to departure from the United States. Voting rights extend to overseas citizens even though they may no longer own property or have other ties to their last state of residence, and even if their intent to return to that state may be uncertain. For those who have never resided in the U.S., sixteen states, to date, allow eligible U.S. citizens to register where a parent would be eligible to vote.

To register to vote and/or apply for an absentee ballot, you can use the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The on-line version, the OFPCA, is accepted by all states and territories except American Samoa and Guam. Voters from American Samoa and Guam must use the standard form of the FPCA, available at the Consulate General or through many American civic groups. The on-line OFPCA form must be completed legibly, printed, signed, dated, and mailed to your local election officials. Your state may allow faxing to speed the process, but you will still need to send in the original by mail. Use an envelope and affix proper postage. The official U.S. Government website for overseas absentee voting assistance, [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), has a wealth of information about absentee voting, including the state-specific instructions for completing the FPCA form, links to state and local officials, and a downloadable emergency ballot for use by those who register in time but fail to receive an official ballot.

As a general rule, you should try to send in the FPCA so that it reaches your local election officials at least forty-five days before the first election in which you are eligible to vote --- ample time for them to process the request and send you a blank ballot. If applying for both registration and an absentee ballot, you may want to mail the FPCA earlier. One FPCA will qualify you to receive all ballots for Federal offices for the next two regular Federal elections (through 2010). However, we recommend that you submit a new FPCA in January of every year, and whenever you move, to ensure that your most recent mailing and e-mail addresses are on file with your local election officials. Keep in mind that because of varying mail pick up times and delays, the day you 'mail' your election mail may not be the day the postal facility postmarks it. FVAP suggests that you mail your election material as soon as possible to avoid missing deadlines.

Under normal circumstances, most states and territories begin sending ballots to overseas citizens 30-45 days before an election. However, if you haven't received your ballot within three weeks of your state's ballot receipt deadline, and you are required to return your voted ballot by mail, you should download, complete, sign, date, and send in a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB), available at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefwab.html>. Make sure it is witnessed if required by your state. If you subsequently receive your regular absentee ballot, execute it and return it regardless of when you receive it. Court decisions sometimes require late counting of ballots voted by Election Day, but received by local election officials for a specified period of time following Election Day.

*Where would I obtain information on issues, positions, and candidates?*

You can find information in U.S. news magazines and newspapers, on the internet and we suggest subscribing to hometown newspapers, or contacting friends and relatives for information on state and local issues.

Both Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad also maintain overseas offices and have information about the candidates and issues. The party organizations can be contacted as follows:

#### Democrats Abroad

430 South Capitol Street, S.E.

Washington, DC 20003

Phone: (202) 863-8177

Fax: (202) 863-8063

Website: [www.democratsabroad.org](http://www.democratsabroad.org)

Email: [info@democratsabroad.org](mailto:info@democratsabroad.org)

#### Republicans Abroad International

1275 K Street, NW, Suite 102

Washington, D.C. 20005

Phone: (202) 608-1423

Fax: (202) 608-1431

Website: [www.republicansabroad.org](http://www.republicansabroad.org)

Email: [chairman@republicansabroad.org](mailto:chairman@republicansabroad.org)

#### **Be an Educated Voter**

Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues is widely available and easy to obtain via the Internet. Use the links appearing on the FVAP website at <http://www.fvap.gov/links/otherlinks.html>, read your hometown newspaper on-line, or search the Internet to locate articles and information.

The Voting Assistance Officer at the Consulate General is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, send an e-mail to [VoteShanghai@state.gov](mailto:VoteShanghai@state.gov) or call (86-21) 32174650 ext. 2114 or 2142.

#### **SSN Needed To Add More Passport Pages**

If your full-validity U.S. passport has not expired yet and is in good condition, but has no blank pages left for visas, we can add additional pages for you free of charge. A Social Security Number is also needed on the application form if the

number has ever been issued. Barring any unusual circumstances, we can usually add pages to your passport in about 30 minutes, while you wait. Learn more at [http://shanghai.usembassy.gov/adding\\_pages.html](http://shanghai.usembassy.gov/adding_pages.html)

### **Register With The Local Police Within 24 Hours of Arrival**

All foreigners (tourists, visitors, and long-term residents), including returning Chinese holding foreign passports, must register their place of residence with the local Public Security Bureau within 24 hours of arrival.

If you are in a hotel, registration is usually done as part of the check-in process. Those staying with family or friends in a private home must also observe this requirement. Failure to do so can result in fines and/or detention. Please consult with your nearest police office for more details.

### **Notarized Consent for Passport Services for Minors Under 14**

U.S. law requires both parents' consent to passport services applications for minors under 14. This consent is normally established by both parents signing the application in front of a U.S. Consular officer. Note that both parents must prove their parentage and custodial status when granting their consent every time a U.S. citizen child under age 14 applies for passport services.

Parentage status may be established with an original or certified copy of the child's birth certificate listing both parents' full names. Custodial status may be proven by an original or certified copy of a court order.

U.S. citizens under age 14 applying for passports must appear in person at American Citizen Services. This requirement does not apply to requests for adding visa pages or other amendments to current U.S. passports.

When only one parent is available to execute the application, that parent must provide, under penalty of perjury, documentary evidence demonstrating that he or she has sole legal custody of the child or has the written consent of the other parent to the passport issuance.

Effective November 1, 2004, written consent must be notarized and provide unequivocal consent to passport issuance.

### **About The Filing of I-130 Applications**

If American citizens resident abroad wish to sponsor an immediate relative (spouse, parent or minor child) for an immigrant visa, the petition (I-130) must be filed with the USCIS office responsible for the petitioner's place of residence. Consular offices at U.S. embassies and consulates are no longer authorized to accept I-130s, although they will continue to provide guidance to American citizen petitioners and their family members.

In China, petitions on behalf of immediate relatives may be filed in person at the USCIS office in Beijing, or you may make the payment at the American Citizen Services office of the US Consulate General near your residence and send the petition by express mail at the address below.

USCIS, US Embassy Beijing  
No. 3 Xiushui Beijiie, Beijing 100600

However, if you do not have a valid long-term Chinese visa, you should file your immediate relative petitions with the nearest USCIS office in your home state in the U.S. Learn more at

[http://shanghai.usembassy.gov/marriage\\_in\\_china.html](http://shanghai.usembassy.gov/marriage_in_china.html)

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