



# ACS *newsletter*

January 2016

**U.S. Embassy, Manila**

1201 Roxas Boulevard,

Ermita, Manila

Philippines 1000

Tel: (632) 301-2000

## VOTE OVERSEAS: 2016

Did you know that voting overseas is now easier than ever?

In 2009, Congress passed the Military and Overseas Voter (MOVE) Act, making overseas voting easier than ever before for citizens overseas. Much of the voting process can now be done electronically through the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). This is the official U.S. Government website for overseas absentee voting information.

Overseas voters are eligible to vote in all regular, primary, and special elections for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives). Some states allow overseas voters to vote in state and local elections depending on the voter's status.



### AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES (ACS)

Consul General:

ACS Chief:

Office:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

Donna M. Blair

Robert J. Jachim Jr.

(63) (2) 301-2246 or 2567

(63) (2) 301-2017

ACSInfoManila@state.gov

manila.usembassy.gov



#### Emergencies

For emergencies after office hours, please call (63) (2) 301-2000 and ask for the Duty Officer.

Website: <http://manila.usembassy.gov> Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/manila.usembassy>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassymanila> Blog: <http://blogs.usembassy.gov/philippines/>

# VOTE OVERSEAS: 2016

## Easy Steps to Voting Overseas

Go to [www.FVAP.gov](http://www.FVAP.gov) to complete your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA).

1. Select your **State** from the drop-down menu on the home page.
2. Click the box at the bottom of the page to **Register to Vote**.
3. The FVAP online tool will walk you through the form and provide you with a PDF packet to print, sign and send directly to your local election official (LEO). Links are also provided here for States that offer online voter registration.
4. Your LEO will review the submitted FPCA. After verifying eligibility, the LEO will send you an absentee ballot.
5. Once you receive an absentee ballot and vote, return it to your local election official to be counted.
6. You can check the status of your registration and/or ballot request by contacting your LEO at any time. You may find your LEO at the following link <https://www.fvap.gov/search-offices>.



The fastest way to get your absentee ballot is to request electronic delivery. Depending on the specific rules of your home state, electronic delivery may be made via fax, email, or online down-

load. Remember to include your email address or fax number on your FPCA. Otherwise your ballot will be mailed to you.

After you send in your completed ballot, you can confirm receipt by your local elections officials online by visiting your [state's election website](#).

If it is already within 30 days before Election Day and you have not yet received your ballot, fill out and mail in an emergency write-in ballot [Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot \(FWAB\)](#).

If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact Manila's Voting Assistance Officer at [Votemanila@state.gov](mailto:Votemanila@state.gov).

**Eligibility.** Generally, all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who are or will be residing outside the United States at the time of an election are eligible to vote absentee in any election for federal office. Some states even allow overseas voters to vote in state elections. To confirm eligibility and residency requirements, contact your state or territory's chief election administrative office or visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

SAVE THE DATE!



American Association of the Philippines  
In cooperation with the American Recreation Club  
*presents the 67th Annual*



## George Washington Birthday Celebration

Join members of the community in an evening of good food, good company and for a good cause – to raise funds to support AAP programs, which include aid to indigent members of the community, Rh negative blood donor sourcing, stewardship of the American Historical Collection, and more. All nationalities welcome!



**Ticket:**  
Php. 3,000 Member  
Php. 3,400 Non-Member  
Attire: Cocktail

**Saturday, February 20, 2016 - 5:30 PM**  
American Recreation Club  
U.S. Embassy, Seafont  
Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

Sponsorship and Tickets:  
892-5198 or 0917-890-9649 - Email: [aap.swc@gmail.com](mailto:aap.swc@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING PRIMARIES: KEY DATES FOR THIS QUARTER

If you want to register to vote in the following States, visit [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) now to complete a registration application and request your absentee ballots for the presidential preference primaries (P) and State primaries (S).

### February

New Hampshire: February 9 (P)  
 South Carolina: February 20 (P, RPO)  
 South Carolina: February 27 (P, DPO, Tentative)

### March

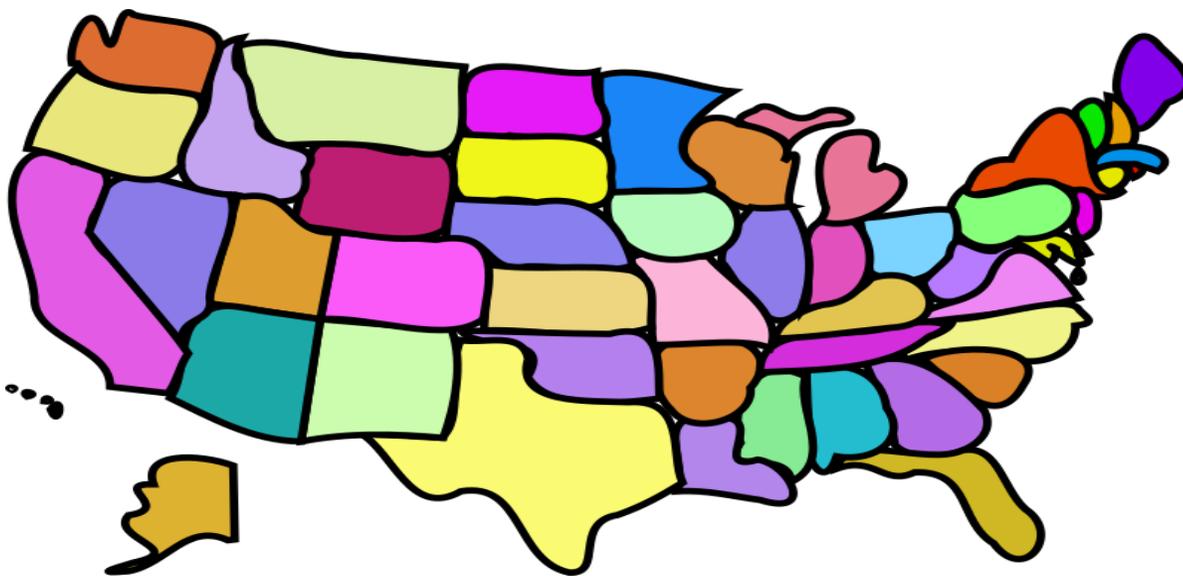
Alabama: March 1 (P, S)  
 Arkansas: March 1 (P, S)  
 Georgia: March 1 (P)  
 Massachusetts: March 1 (P)  
 Oklahoma: March 1 (P)  
 Tennessee: March 1 (P)  
 Texas: March 1 (P, S)  
 Vermont: March 1 (P)  
 Virginia: March 1 (P)  
 Louisiana: March 5 (P)  
 Idaho: March 8 (P, RPO)  
 Michigan: March 8 (P)

Mississippi: March 8 (P, S)  
 Puerto Rico: March 13 (P, RPO)  
 Florida: March 15 (P)  
 Illinois: March 15 (P, S)  
 Missouri: March 15 (P)  
 North Carolina: March 15 (P,S)  
 Ohio: March 15 (P,S)  
 Arizona: March 22 (P)

### April

Wisconsin: April 5 (P)  
 New York: April 19 (P)  
 Connecticut: April 26 (P)  
 Delaware: April 26 (P)  
 Maryland: April 26 (P,S)  
 Pennsylvania: April 26 (P,S)  
 Rhode Island: April 26 (P)

**DPO**=Democratic Primary Only **RPO**=Republican Primary Only



Not voting in these States? Find your State's primary election dates at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov): Select the State you want to register to vote in from the drop-down menu at the top left-hand side of the home page. To find your State's election website for specific information on candidates, elections, contact information, and links to your local election offices, visit [FVAP's contact page](#).

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Temporary Suspension of Phone Inquiries for Citizenship Cases.** Due to an increased demand for Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) applications, telephone inquiry hours for CRBA and Derivative U.S. Citizenship cases will be temporarily suspended effective January 11, 2016. This will allow our staff to conduct extended appointment hours, accommodating an increased number of CRBA appointments.

If you need assistance during this time, you may send an email to ACS at [ACSIInfoManila@state.gov](mailto:ACSIInfoManila@state.gov). Please add the words "CRBA" or "Consular Report of Birth Abroad" to the subject line of your email. Phone hours for passport inquiries will continue during this time and will not be affected.

**Discontinuation of Visa Page Inserts.** For cost and security reasons, effective January 1, 2016, the Department of State no longer provides supplemental 24-page Visa Page Inserts for passports. To reduce the impact of this coming change, new passport applicants now receive 52 -page passports. Applicants who require extra visa pages will now need to apply for a new passport book. Instructions on how to renew your passport can be found on our website: <http://manila.usembassy.gov/service/passports/renewal.html>

**REMINDER: Check Your Child's Passport.** Minor passports expire every 5 years. If you are traveling with children, please check their passport expiration dates well in advance of your travel.

## PREPARING FOR THE 2016 TAX SEASON

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides guidance for U.S. citizens abroad preparing for the 2015 tax filing season. This IRS guidance is posted under Federal Benefits and Obligations on [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). The IRS has created the International Taxpayers webpage (<https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers>) to help answer questions and provide the forms needed to navigate some of the complexities faced by American citizens and other taxpayers who live and work abroad. Other resources include information on the foreign earned income and foreign housing exclusions and foreign tax credit, along with instructions on how to catch up on filing tax returns.

The IRS office formerly located at the US Embassy in Beijing is now closed and no longer offers overseas taxpayer services.

If you are a taxpayer who lives outside the United States and have specific individual or business account questions, you may contact the International Taxpayer Service Call Center by phone or fax. The International Call Center is operational Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Eastern Time): Tel: (267) 941-1000 (not toll-free) Fax: (267) 941-1055.

## **BEYOND MANILA: SERVICES FOR U.S. CITIZENS**

Did you know that there are several opportunities to receive U.S. Citizen Services outside of Manila?

### **CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES**

The **Consular Agency in Cebu City** offers routine passport, citizenship, notarial, and other services to Americans living in the central and southern Philippines. It also offers special consular services for Americans citizens including assistance regarding deaths, arrests, and the welfare and whereabouts of American citizens in the Philippines. Americans planning to marry in the Philippines may also execute an "Affidavit in Lieu of a Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage" at the Consular Agency.

The Consular Agency also accepts applications for passport (first-time and renewals), and applications to replace lost, damaged, or stolen passports. Applications are then sent to the American Embassy in Manila for adjudication. You can also pay the application fees for mail-in renewals at the Agency.

The telephone number for the Consular Agency in Cebu is (63 32) 231-1261. To send a fax, dial (63 32) 231-0174. Alternatively, you may contact the Agency by email at [ACSInfoManila@state.gov](mailto:ACSInfoManila@state.gov).



### **OUTREACH TO BAGUIO, LAOAG CITY, AND DAVAO CITY**

This quarter, Consular representatives from American Citizen Services (ACS) unit will travel to several locations in our district to provide routine services to U.S. Citizens. Representatives from other agencies such as the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) and the Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (DHS-USCIS) will also accompany to some locations. Go the following [link](#) and view section to the right entitled “Latest Messages to U.S. Citizens” for updates messages on outreach.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Representation</b>
<b>Laoag City</b>	<b>January 29, 2016</b>	<b>ACS, VA</b>
<b>Davao City</b>	<b>February 11, 2016</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Iloilo/Bacolod</b>	<b>February 23-24, 2016</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Angeles/Olongapo</b>	<b>March 2016</b>	<b>TBD</b>

## UPCOMING HOLIDAYS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSURES

The Embassy will be closed on the following holidays through March 2015. A full list of holiday closures can be found at <http://manila.usembassy.gov/www/holidays.html>.

<u>HOLIDAY</u>	<u>LEGAL DATE</u>	<u>CLOSING DATE</u>
Chinese New Year's Day	Monday, February 8	Monday, February 8
U.S. President's Day	Monday, February 15	Monday, February 15
30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of EDSA Revolution	Thursday, February 25	Thursday, February 25
Maundy Thursday	Thursday, March 24	Thursday, March 24
Good Friday	Friday, March 25	Friday, March 25

The **first Wednesday of every month**, the American Citizen Services section is closed to the public for training and administrative purposes.

In case of an emergency outside business hours, American citizens may reach the Embassy Duty Officer through the **Embassy operator at (63)(2) 301-2000**.

## SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

All American citizens who live abroad and travel extensively to foreign countries are encouraged to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

### BY ENROLLING IN STEP:

- ♦ Help your family and friends get in touch with you in case of an emergency.
- ♦ Help the U.S. Embassy or Consulate contact you in case of a crisis in the places you visit.
- ♦ Receive the most current information about Singapore and any of the countries where you plan to travel to, including [Travel Warnings](#) and [Travel Alerts](#).
- ♦ You only need to sign up once, and then you can add and delete trips from your account based on your current travel plans.



## DOCTOR'S NOTES: HAND, FOOT, and MOUTH DISEASE



Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease, also known as HFMD, is a very common, usually mild, but highly contagious viral infection which usually affects infants and children under 5 years of age. However, it can sometimes occur in adults. In a recent report, the Department of Health's Epidemiology Bureau noted a significant surge in HFMD cases in the Philippines reporting an over 500 percent increase in the number of cases in 2015 compared to the prior year. As of October 2015, the highest instances of HFMD were recorded in Western Visayas, followed by CALABARZON( Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), and the National Capital Region (NCR-Metro Manila). In a tropical country like the Philippines, outbreak can occur year round.

**SIGNS & SYMPTOMS.** HFMD is caused by a group of enteroviruses including Coxsackievirus A16 and enterovirus 71 (less common), the latter being of particular concern as it can cause severe disease. The infection manifests as sores in and around the mouth, rashes on the hands and feet, and/or the buttocks and genitalia. The non-itchy rash can start out as red dots, but can turn into blisters and bumps. People with HFMD may be irritable, have no appetite, develop fever, a sore throat, and feel generally unwell. (This is not the same as foot-and-mouth-disease, which affects animals).



**MODE of TRANSMISSION:** HFMD may be spread through person-to-person contact, handshakes or hugs, from contact with droplets of an infected person when he coughs or sneezes, from saliva when kissing or sharing drinks. Symptoms usually appear about a week after getting the virus. Some people, especially adults, may not manifest the symptoms, but can unknowingly pass on the virus. Always maintain good hygiene (especially hand washing) to minimize spread of infection.

**AGES AFFECTED:** This influenza-like illness affects mostly children younger than 5 years of age. Older individuals may also become infected (rare).

**DURATION:** The virus usually clears up on its own within 10 days. While the patient may be most contagious when he is showing symptoms, he may still be able to transmit the virus after symptoms are gone as it can persist in the stool for up to six weeks later. It is important for HFMD patients to discuss when they may return to school or work with their doctor.

## HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (CONTINUED)

**TREATMENT/MANAGEMENT:** As the disease is caused by a virus, antibiotics are of no help. Symptomatic treatment is recommended. Fever-reducing medicines and pain relievers help alleviate symptoms. (Do not give aspirin to children ). Eating may be challenging as the sores in the mouth can make the patient miserable. Avoid spicy, salty, or acidic or acidic foods. Cold drinks may help. Ice cream, yogurt, and ice chips may be better tolerated. Watch out for signs of dehydration. Patients should be encouraged to increase their fluid intake, even if it hurts to swallow.

**EMPHASIS ON PREVENTION:** There are several viruses that can cause HFMD, so a patient can get infected more than once. Although there is no specific way to prevent being infected, the public should take extra precaution to lessen the risk of catching the disease by avoiding close contact with infected persons, proper disposal of baby diapers, practicing strict hand hygiene with soap and water, and washing and disinfecting dirty surfaces, including toys, doorknobs, tables and chairs.



Sources: DOH Philippines, google images: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), WHO

## APPLICANTS FOR ID CARD SERVICES AND DEERS ENROLLMENTS

The Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUMAG) is pleased to announce the relocation of our DEERS RAPID STATION to the address where we will continue to provide services on an appointment basis.

Annex 3 (Veterans Affairs Office) RM. I105  
Embassy of the United States of America  
Seafront Compound  
1501 Roxas Boulevard  
1302 Pasay City, Manila

**Telephone:** (63) (02)301-2000 extensions 5275, 5701, 2149

**Website:** <http://manila.usembassy.gov/dodcardsver2.html>

## PLANNING TO LEAVE THE PHILIPPINES?

- ◆ Check Your Passport's Validity. Renew your passport at least 90 days prior to expiration. Most countries require a minimum passport validity of six months before they will issue a visa or allow entry to their country. NOTE: It can take 2-3 weeks to process routine tourist passport applications so please plan your travel well in advance.
- ◆ Exit requirements. U.S. citizens leaving the Philippines on an Emergency Passport Document (EPDP) should get the necessary stamps from the Bureau of Immigration or they are likely to face problems at the point of departure. You may contact the [Bureau of Immigration](#) to apply for the exit visa.
- ◆ If you are holding a Temporary Visitor Visa and have stayed in the Philippines beyond the period of your visa, you will need to apply for the proper exit clearance at one of five Bureau of Immigration [Regional Offices](#). Subposts cannot process exit clearance permits.
- ◆ Update STEP. If you no longer live in or travel to the Philippines, or you need to update your registration status so that you no longer receive travel updates and our ACS Newsletter, please visit STEP at <https://step.state.gov/STEP/Pages/Common/Subscribe.aspx>. Updating your status in [STEP](#) will remove you from the mailing list for this newsletter and other Embassy Messages for U.S. citizens traveling to or living in Philippines.

### AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES (ACS)

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