

DEBRA BOWEN

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Secretary of State Bowen Unveils One-Stop Shop for California Voters in Military or Living Abroad

SACRAMENTO – Harnessing the convenience the Internet provides to California voters serving in the military or living overseas, Secretary of State Debra Bowen today unveiled new website features linking these voters to the resources they need to make their voices heard in every election.

The Secretary of State's newly launched Military and Overseas Voter Information web pages at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_mov.htm include a new portal to county elections offices and a step-by-step guide on how to register to vote, request a ballot and return a voted ballot by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. The web pages, which are linked to the Federal Voting Assistance Program, also offer answers to common questions, and information about how state and federal laws work to protect these voters' rights.

"Timing is everything for California voters serving in the military and living abroad," said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. "To give military and overseas voters time to review, vote and return their ballots by the 8:00 p.m. Election Day deadline, they need their ballots earlier. My website provides a one-stop shop for California voters stationed overseas and living abroad to make sure they know their rights and how to exercise them."

In the last statewide general election, 69,805 special absentee ballots were cast. California counties with the highest numbers of voters serving in the military or living abroad are Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Orange County and Santa Clara.

To qualify as a military or overseas voter in California elections, a voter must be:

- A member of the United States armed forces or an auxiliary branch;
- A U.S. citizen temporarily living outside U.S. territorial limits or the District of Columbia;
- A person living on a merchant vessel documented under U.S. law; or
- A spouse or dependent of a member of the U.S. military or an auxiliary branch.

The following information is available to military and overseas voters on the Secretary of State's website.

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- **Becoming a Special Absentee Voter:** Even if a voter is already registered, he or she must re-register to vote as a Special Absentee Voter to vote overseas. California military and overseas voters may use a Federal Post Card Application to register to vote and request a ballot simultaneously. Military and overseas voters can download a copy of the application from the Secretary of State's website.
- **Access to Ballots:** Nineteen counties post their sample ballots online, which military and overseas voters can download to use as a special absentee ballot. Many other counties email blank ballots to military and overseas voters upon request. The Secretary of State provides an Internet portal to the 58 counties' options.
- **Voter Information:** To learn more about what is on the ballot, who represents them and important dates, voters can access the Secretary of State's Official Voter Information Guide for the November election.
- **Special Absentee Voting:** All ballots must be returned to county elections officials by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. California law allows Special Absentee Voters to return their ballots to county elections officials by fax.
- **Frequently Asked Questions:** Answers to some of the most common questions about voting from afar.
- **Contact Us:** The Secretary of State's office has a dedicated email address that links military and overseas voters from across the globe to staff can offer additional assistance at mov@sos.ca.gov.

The deadline to register to vote in the November 2 General Election is October 18.

To sign up for election news, trivia and election night updates via Twitter, go to <http://twitter.com/CASOSvote>.

For news updates via email, RSS feed or Facebook go to www.sos.ca.gov/multimedia.

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