



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Contact: Nghia Nguyen Demovic
916-653-6575

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Reminds Counties that Today is the First Day to Mail Ballots to Military and Overseas Voters

Continues Armed Forces Voters Week Activities

SACRAMENTO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson reminded county elections officials that today marks the 60th day before the November 7, 2006 General Election and the first day they can send absentee ballots to military and overseas voters.

"As California's Chief Elections Official, one of my top priorities is to ensure that every eligible Californian registers and casts their vote," said Secretary of State Bruce McPherson. "That is why I have developed new resources to serve Californians living overseas. I hope every eligible Californian chooses to take part in this important election and make their voice heard."

This week, Secretary McPherson kicked off Armed Forces Voters Week - a week designated by the Department of Defense to increase voter participation among members of the armed forces. Secretary McPherson personally traveled to military bases to deliver voter registration cards and voter education materials to encourage participation by those who risk their lives to protect our democracy. He also coordinated with the Federal Voting Assistance Program to distribute materials to over 20,000 embassies, foreign consulates and military units.

During an address to members of the California National Guard at Mather Field on Wednesday, Secretary McPherson announced that the following resources are now available to military and overseas voters:

- A new email address mov@ss.ca.gov is now available for military and overseas voters which can be used from virtually anywhere in the world to ask questions about voting deadlines or their ballot information.
- A dedicated section of the Secretary of State website has been designated to provide information aimed at military and overseas voters. Election information can be found at http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_mov.htm.
- A faxable ballot that appears in a more generic, user-friendly format that allows military and overseas voters to simply write the name of the candidate and office (or proposition) for which they are voting. This eliminates the need for each county to print a separate ballot for faxing, reduces administrative work, expedites the casting of ballots by military and overseas voters, and aims to ensure that these ballots are received in time to be counted. This resource was defended in court by Secretary McPherson and upheld by the 3rd District Court of Appeals.

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Voters can obtain details about their right to vote and download the appropriate forms by visiting the Secretary of State's website. Forms for registering to vote and applications for absentee ballots are also available from the Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website at www.fvap.gov.