



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Celebrates "Armed Forces Voters Week" and Touts Enhanced Voting Resources for Military and Overseas Voters

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today, Secretary of State Bruce McPherson visited with the California National Guard to mark Armed Forces Voters Week and highlight resources available for military and overseas voters in the November 7th, 2006 General Election.

September 3-9 has been declared Armed Forces Voters Week by the Department of Defense in an effort to increase the electoral participation by deployed troops.

Secretary McPherson also reminded county registrars that this Friday, September 8, marks 60 days before the November 7, 2006 General Election, which is when counties may begin to send California's military and overseas voters their requested ballots.

"Two thousand members of California's National Guard are currently serving overseas. As California's Chief Elections Official one of my top priorities is to make sure our military and overseas voters have every resource they need to cast their vote while serving away from home. That's why I defended our new easy to use fax ballot in court and why I was pleased when it was upheld by the 3rd District Court of Appeals earlier this summer," said Secretary McPherson.

The new overseas ballot 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.

Major General William H. Wade, II, Adjutant General, the highest-ranking member of the California National Guard, and members of the California National Guard community joined Secretary McPherson to encourage the troops to exercise their right to vote.

"I appreciate Secretary McPherson's commitment to ensuring that California National Guard members receive the same opportunity to vote as other citizens," said Major General Wade. "It is the right thing to do for our young men and women who are committed to serving their fellow Californians."

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To provide easy access to information for overseas troops, Secretary McPherson announced a new e-mail address, MOV@ss.ca.gov, which members of the military can use from virtually anywhere in the world to ask questions about voting deadlines or their ballot.

Resources such as posters, news releases, and information will also be distributed to 20,000 embassies, foreign consulates, and military units through the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to educate California's overseas voters.

For more information about California's Military and Overseas Voting (MOV) resources for military, citizens living abroad, and their families, visit: http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_mov.htm.

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