

SECRETARY
of STATE

Sam Reed



Legislative Building
PO Box 40220
Olympia, WA 98504-0220
Tel 360.902.4151
Fax 360.586.5629
www.secstate.wa.gov

September 22, 2009

The Honorable Adam Smith
United States House of Representatives
House Armed Services Committee

Dear Congressman Smith,

The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act, sponsored by Senator Schumer, was amended onto the **National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, S. 1390**.

I support most of the provisions of Senator Schumer's legislation. However, I have serious concerns with the requirement in Sec. 586 that absentee ballots to military and overseas voters be mailed 45 days before Election Day.

- This requirement is not an option for Washington due to the timing of the state's Primary in August, and the timing of the initiative and referendum process in the State Constitution. While the legislation does allow a state to apply for a waiver each year, this is not a solution for a problem that will occur *every year*. The requirement assumes that voted ballots must be *received* no later than Election Day, so the entire transit time must occur before Election Day.
- Washington law allows ballots to be *postmarked* no later than Election Day. We mail military and overseas ballots 30 days before Election Day, providing total transit time of 51 days for General Elections, and 45 days for Primary and Special Elections.

I strongly support 45 days of transit time for absentee ballots, but urge you to remove the mandate that the entire 45 day period occur before Election Day.

Washington provides excellent service to our military and overseas voters, such as:

- Exemption from the Voter Registration Requirement;
- Online Voter Registration;
- Online Address Change;
- Personalized Candidate and Ballot Measure Information on our website;
- Ballots by Email or Fax; and
- Free postage.

In the 2008 General Election, 73% of Washington's 62,000 military and overseas voters participated, with 99% of the absentee ballots accepted and counted.

Thank you for your consideration, and please call on me if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

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Secretary of State



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The Honorable Rick Larsen
United States House of Representatives
House Armed Services Committee

Dear Congressman Larsen,

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September 22, 2009

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
United States House of Representatives
House Armed Services Committee

Dear Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers,

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September 22, 2009

The Honorable Robert Brady
United States House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

Dear Congressman Brady,

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September 22, 2009

The Honorable Dan Lungren
United States House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

Dear Congressman Lungren,

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SAM REED
Secretary of State





September 22, 2009

The Honorable Ike Skelton
United States House of Representatives
House Armed Services Committee

Dear Congressman Skelton,

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SAM REED
Secretary of State



September 22, 2009

The Honorable Buck McKeon
United States House of Representatives
House Armed Services Committee

Dear Congressman McKeon,

The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act, sponsored by Senator Schumer, was amended onto the **National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, S. 1390**.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Reed".

SAM REED
Secretary of State