

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 699

To guarantee the right of all active duty military personnel, merchant mariners, and their dependents to vote in Federal, State, and local elections.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 1997

Mr. BONILLA (for himself and Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Oversight, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To guarantee the right of all active duty military personnel, merchant mariners, and their dependents to vote in Federal, State, and local elections.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Military Voting Rights  
5 Act of 1997”.

1 **SEC. 2. GUARANTEE OF RESIDENCY.**

2 Article VII of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief  
3 Act of 1940 (50 U.S.C. App. 590 et seq.) is amended by  
4 adding at the end the following new section:

5 “SEC. 704. (a) For purposes of voting for an office  
6 of the United States or of a State, a person who is absent  
7 from a State in compliance with military or naval orders  
8 shall not, solely by reason of that absence—

9 “(1) be deemed to have lost a residence or  
10 domicile in that State;

11 “(2) be deemed to have acquired a residence or  
12 domicile in any other State; or

13 “(3) be deemed to have become resident in or  
14 a resident of any other State.

15 “(b) In this section, the term ‘State’ includes a terri-  
16 tory or possession of the United States, a political subdivi-  
17 sion of a State, territory, or possession, and the District  
18 of Columbia.”.

19 **SEC. 3. STATE RESPONSIBILITY TO GUARANTEE MILITARY**  
20 **VOTING RIGHTS.**

21 (a) REGISTRATION AND BALLOTING.—Section 102 of  
22 the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act  
23 (42 U.S.C. 1973ff–1) is amended—

24 (1) by inserting “(a) ELECTIONS FOR FEDERAL  
25 OFFICES.—” before “Each State shall—”; and

1 by adding at the end the following new sub-  
2 section:

3 “(b) ELECTIONS FOR STATE AND LOCAL OF-  
4 FICES.—Each State shall—

5 “(1) permit absent uniformed services voters to  
6 use absentee registration procedures and to vote by  
7 absentee ballot in general, special, primary, and run-  
8 off elections for State and local offices; and

9 “(2) accept and process, with respect to any  
10 election described in paragraph (1), any otherwise  
11 valid voter registration application from an absent  
12 uniformed services voter if the application is received  
13 by the appropriate State election official not less  
14 than 30 days before the election.”.

15 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for  
16 title I of such Act is amended by striking “**FOR FED-**  
17 **ERAL OFFICE**”.

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