

jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the progress of the Secretaries in implementing and improving the standard.

“(4) UPDATES.—Whenever the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs update the standard developed under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on such update, including a comprehensive and detailed description of such update and the reasons for such update.

“(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘sexual trauma’ means a condition described in section 1720D(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code.

“(2) The term ‘appropriate committees of Congress’ means—

“(A) the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and

“(B) the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate.”

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES ON AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RELATING TO SEXUAL TRAUMA

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, § 599, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1421, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall inform members of the Armed Forces, using mechanisms available to the Secretary, of the eligibility of such members for services of the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to sexual trauma.

“(b) INFORMATION FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE COORDINATORS.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure—

“(1) that Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and uniformed victims advocates of the Department of Defense advise members of the Armed Forces who report instances of sexual trauma regarding the eligibility of such members for services at the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

“(2) that such information is included in mandatory training materials.

“(c) SEXUAL TRAUMA DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘sexual trauma’ means psychological trauma described in section 1720D(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code.”

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Pub. L. 112-81, div. A, title V, § 581(a), Dec. 31, 2011, 125 Stat. 1430, provided that: “Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 31, 2011], the Secretaries of the military departments shall prescribe regulations on the provision of legal assistance to victims of sexual assault. Such regulations shall require that legal assistance be provided by military or civilian legal assistance counsel pursuant to section 1044 of title 10, United States Code.”

§ 1566. Voting assistance: compliance assessments; assistance

(a) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe regulations to require that the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force ensure their compliance with any directives issued by the Secretary of Defense in implementing any voting assistance program.

(b) VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “voting assistance programs” means—

(1) the Federal Voting Assistance Program carried out under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff et seq.);¹ and

(2) any similar program.

(c) ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPLIANCE REVIEWS.—(1) The Inspector General of each of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force shall conduct—

(A) an annual review of the effectiveness of voting assistance programs; and

(B) an annual review of the compliance with voting assistance programs of that armed force.

(2) Upon the completion of each annual review under paragraph (1), each Inspector General specified in that paragraph shall submit to the Inspector General of the Department of Defense a report on the results of each such review. Such report shall be submitted in time each year to be reflected in the report of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense under paragraph (3).

(3) Not later than March 31 each year, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense shall submit to Congress a report on—

(A) the effectiveness during the preceding calendar year of voting assistance programs; and

(B) the level of compliance during the preceding calendar year with voting assistance programs of each of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force.

[(d) Repealed. Pub. L. 109-364, div. A, title V, § 596(a), Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2235.]

(e) REGULAR MILITARY DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENTS.—The Secretary of each military department shall include in the set of issues and programs to be reviewed during any management effectiveness review or inspection at the installation level an assessment of compliance with the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff et seq.)¹ and with Department of Defense regulations regarding the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

(f) VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS.—(1) Voting assistance officers shall be appointed or assigned under Department of Defense regulations. Commanders at all levels are responsible for ensuring that unit voting officers are trained and equipped to provide information and assistance to members of the armed forces on voting matters. Performance evaluation reports pertaining to a member who has been assigned to serve as a voting assistance officer shall comment on the performance of the member as a voting assistance officer.

(2) Under regulations and procedures (including directives) prescribed by the Secretary, a member of the armed forces appointed or assigned to duty as a voting assistance officer shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be given the time and resources needed to perform the member’s duties as a voting assistance officer during the period in advance of a general election when members and their dependents are preparing and submitting absentee ballots.

(g) DELIVERY OF MAIL FROM OVERSEAS PRECEDING FEDERAL ELECTIONS.—(1) During the four months preceding a general Federal election month, the Secretary of Defense shall periodically conduct surveys of all overseas locations and vessels at sea with military units responsible for collecting mail for return shipment to the United States and all port facilities in the

¹ See References in Text note below.

United States and overseas where military-related mail is collected for shipment to overseas locations or to the United States. The purpose of each survey shall be to determine if voting materials are awaiting shipment at any such location and, if so, the length of time that such materials have been held at that location. During the fourth and third months before a general Federal election month, such surveys shall be conducted biweekly. During the second and first months before a general Federal election month, such surveys shall be conducted weekly.

(2) The Secretary shall ensure that voting materials are transmitted expeditiously by military postal authorities at all times. The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, implement measures to ensure that a postmark or other official proof of mailing date is provided on each absentee ballot collected at any overseas location or vessel at sea whenever the Department of Defense is responsible for collecting mail for return shipment to the United States. The Secretary shall ensure that the measures implemented under the preceding sentence do not result in the delivery of absentee ballots to the final destination of such ballots after the date on which the election for Federal office is held.

(3) In this section, the term “general Federal election month” means November in an even-numbered year.

(h) NOTICE OF DEADLINES AND REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary of each military department, utilizing the voting assistance officer network established for each military installation, shall, to the maximum extent practicable, provide notice to members of the armed forces stationed at that installation of the last date before a general Federal election for which absentee ballots mailed from a postal facility located at that installation can reasonably be expected to be timely delivered to the appropriate State and local election officials.

(i) REGISTRATION AND VOTING INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS AND DEPENDENTS.—(1) The Secretary of each military department, using a variety of means including both print and electronic media, shall, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure that members of the armed forces and their dependents who are qualified to vote have ready access to information regarding voter registration requirements and deadlines (including voter registration), absentee ballot application requirements and deadlines, and the availability of voting assistance officers to assist members and dependents to understand and comply with these requirements.

(2) The Secretary of each military department shall make the national voter registration form prepared for purposes of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act by the Federal Election Commission available so that each person who enlists shall receive such form at the time of the enlistment, or as soon thereafter as practicable.

(3) Where practicable, a special day or days shall be designated at each military installation for the purpose of informing members of the armed forces and their dependents of election timing, registration requirements, and voting procedures.

(Added Pub. L. 107-107, div. A, title XVI, § 1602(a)(1), Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1274; amended Pub. L. 107-252, title VII, § 701, Oct. 29, 2002, 116 Stat. 1722; Pub. L. 108-375, div. A, title X, § 1084(d)(13), Oct. 28, 2004, 118 Stat. 2062; Pub. L. 109-364, div. A, title V, § 596(a), (d), Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2235, 2236; Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, § 924(b)(1)(M), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3820.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, referred to in subsecs. (b)(1), (e), and (i)(2), is Pub. L. 99-410, Aug. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 924, which was formerly classified principally to subchapter I-G (§1973ff et seq.) of chapter 20 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering in Title 52, Voting and Elections, and is now classified principally to chapter 203 (§20301 et seq.) of Title 52. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2021—Subsecs. (a), (c)(1), (3)(B). Pub. L. 116-283 substituted “Marine Corps, and Space Force” for “and Marine Corps”.

2006—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 109-364, §596(a), struck out subsec. (d), which required the Inspector General of the Department of Defense to periodically conduct unannounced assessments of compliance with requirements of law regarding voting by members of the armed forces at Department of Defense installations.

Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 109-364, §596(d), struck out at end “Not later than April 29, 2003, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the measures to be implemented to ensure the timely transmittal and postmarking of voting materials and identifying the persons responsible for implementing such measures.”

2004—Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 108-375, §1084(d)(13)(A), substituted “April 29, 2003” for “the date that is 6 months after the date of the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002”.

Subsecs. (h), (i)(1), (3). Pub. L. 108-375, §1084(d)(13)(B), substituted “armed forces” for “Armed Forces”.

2002—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 107-252, §701(a), designated existing provisions as par. (1) and added par. (2).

Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 107-252, §701(b), inserted at end “The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, implement measures to ensure that a postmark or other official proof of mailing date is provided on each absentee ballot collected at any overseas location or vessel at sea whenever the Department of Defense is responsible for collecting mail for return shipment to the United States. The Secretary shall ensure that the measures implemented under the preceding sentence do not result in the delivery of absentee ballots to the final destination of such ballots after the date on which the election for Federal office is held. Not later than the date that is 6 months after the date of the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the measures to be implemented to ensure the timely transmittal and postmarking of voting materials and identifying the persons responsible for implementing such measures.”

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 107-252, §701(c), added subsec. (h).

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 107-252, §701(d), added subsec. (i).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

TERMINATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For termination, effective Dec. 31, 2021, of provisions in subsec. (c)(3) of this section requiring submittal of

annual report to Congress, see section 1061 of Pub. L. 114–328, set out as a note under section 111 of this title.

INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGISTRATION FOR VOTING AND ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUESTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES UNDERGOING DEPLOYMENT OVERSEAS

Pub. L. 116–92, div. A, title V, § 580C, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1409, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days prior to a general election for Federal office, a member of the Armed Forces shall, upon request, be provided with the following:

“(1) A Federal write-in absentee ballot prescribed pursuant to section 103 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (52 U.S.C. 20303), together with instructions on the appropriate use of the ballot with respect to the State in which the member is registered to vote.

“(2) In the case of a member intending to vote in a State that does not accept the Federal write-in absentee ballot as a simultaneous application and acceptable ballot for Federal elections, instructions on, and an opportunity to fill out, the official post card form for absentee voter registration application and absentee ballot application prescribed under section 101(b)(2) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (52 U.S.C. 20301(b)(2)).

“(b) PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE OF DISCHARGE.—Ballots and instructions pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a), and briefings and forms pursuant to paragraph (2) of such subsection, shall be provided by Voting Assistance Officers or such other personnel as the Secretary of the military department concerned shall designate.”

INITIAL REPORT

Pub. L. 107–107, div. A, title XVI, § 1602(b), Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1276, directed that the first report under subsec. (c)(3) of this section be submitted not later than Mar. 31, 2003.

§ 1566a. Voting assistance: voter assistance offices

(a) DESIGNATION OF OFFICES ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AS VOTER ASSISTANCE OFFICES.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense under subsection (f), the Secretaries of the military departments shall designate offices on installations under their jurisdiction, or at such installations as the Secretary of the military department concerned shall determine are best located to provide access to voter assistance services for all covered individuals in a particular location, to provide absent uniformed services voters, particularly those individuals described in subsection (b), and their family members with the following:

(1) Information on voter registration procedures and absentee ballot procedures (including the official post card form prescribed under section 101 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff)).¹

(2) Information and assistance, if requested, including access to the Internet where practicable, to register to vote in an election for Federal office.

(3) Information and assistance, if requested, including access to the Internet where practicable, to update the individual's voter registration information, including instructions for absent uniformed services voters to change

their address by submitting the official post card form prescribed under section 101 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act to the appropriate State election official.

(4) Information and assistance, if requested, to request an absentee ballot under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff et seq.).¹

(b) COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—The individuals described in this subsection are absent uniformed services voters who—

(1) are undergoing a permanent change of duty station;

(2) are deploying overseas for at least six months;

(3) are returning from an overseas deployment of at least six months; or

(4) otherwise request assistance related to voter registration.

(c) TIMING OF PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.—The regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense under subsection (f) shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with military necessity, that the assistance provided under subsection (a) is provided to a covered individual described in subsection (b)—

(1) if described in subsection (b)(1), as part of the administrative in-processing of the covered individual upon arrival at the new duty station of the covered individual;

(2) if described in subsection (b)(2), as part of the administrative out-processing of the covered individual in preparation for deployment from the home duty station of the covered individual;

(3) if described in subsection (b)(3), as part of the administrative in-processing of the covered individual upon return to the home duty station of the covered individual; or

(4) if described in subsection (b)(4), at the time the covered individual requests such assistance.

(d) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of each military department, or the Presidential designee, shall take appropriate actions to inform absent uniformed services voters of the assistance available under subsection (a), including—

(1) the availability of information and voter registration assistance at offices designated under subsection (a); and

(2) the time, location, and manner in which an absent uniformed services voter may utilize such assistance.

(e) AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICES AS VOTER REGISTRATION AGENCY ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense may authorize the Secretaries of the military departments to designate offices on military installations as voter registration agencies under section 7(a)(2) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1973gg–5(a)(2))¹ for all purposes of such Act. Any office so designated shall discharge the requirements of this section, under the regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense under subsection (f).

(f) REGULATIONS.—

(1) The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe regulations relating to the administration of

¹ See References in Text note below.