



Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State
Connecticut

For Immediate Release:
November 23, 2009

For more information:
Av Harris: (860) 509-6255
Cell: (860) 463-5939

-PRESS RELEASE-

**SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ, SENATOR DODD,
REPRESENTATIVE COURTNEY OUTLINE NEW
FEDERAL LAW IMPROVING BALLOT ACCESS
FOR MILITARY OVERSEAS**

MOVE ACT SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT OBAMA; DRAMATICALLY
REDUCES ABSENTEE BALLOT WAIT TIME FOR MILITARY AND OVERSEAS
VOTERS

GROTON: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today joined US Senator Chris Dodd and Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2) to outline the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act, recently signed into law by President Obama, that will dramatically reduce processing and postage time it takes for military and overseas voters to cast absentee ballots. Joining Bysiewicz, Dodd and Courtney to outline how the new federal law will be implemented to improve ballot access for military and overseas voters were Mr. Joe Camposeo and Ms. Patricia Strauss from the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, and Mr. Joel Angle, a military reservist from Connecticut who had trouble casting an absentee ballot while stationed overseas in 2004.

“Anyone brave enough to wear a uniform and put their lives on the line to protect our fundamental freedoms should absolutely be assured that their votes will be counted,” said Secretary Bysiewicz, Connecticut’s chief election official. “For too long, unacceptable delays with processing and postage have left our military stationed overseas with simply not enough time to vote. I commend Senator Dodd and Congressman Courtney for helping to pass this legislation and President Obama for signing the MOVE Act into law. It will dramatically reduce the amount of time it will take for military and overseas voters to receive applications for absentee ballots and the ballots themselves. This will guarantee our military personnel a real opportunity to participate in our elections.”

“It’s unacceptable that those Americans who so bravely volunteer to defend our democracy often face special challenges when it comes to participating in the democratic process,” said Senator Christopher Dodd, a member of the Senate Rules Committee that originated the MOVE Act. “No American should be denied the right to have his or her

voice heard – particularly those Americans whose service protects that right for all of us. This legislation streamlines the voting registration and balloting process, ensuring that the votes cast by our troops overseas will actually be counted. I was proud to support it, and I'm equally proud that, here in Connecticut, Secretary of State Bysiewicz is on the job to implement it effectively.”

Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2) said, “There is nothing more fundamental to our democracy than the right of every eligible citizen to vote. During every election thousands of service members and their families are overseas protecting our nation, and we need to guarantee that during their service that we protect their right to vote. The provisions outlined in the MOVE Act will update existing voter laws, improve resources and guarantee that service members overseas have the necessary information and materials to guarantee their inclusion in our democracy.”

Patricia Strauss, Vice President of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, said, “The Connecticut Town Clerks Association supports all measures that will ensure our members of the Armed Forces stationed overseas have the right and the ability to vote in a timely manner in all elections. We look forward to working with State and Federal Officials to implement this legislation.”

Among the new requirements of the MOVE Act:

- States must establish procedures that allow military/overseas voters to request voter registration applications and absentee ballot applications by mail or electronically for general, special, and primary elections for Federal office.
- The States must develop procedures for transmitting blank ballots to military/overseas voters by mail and electronically for general, special, and primary elections for Federal office.
- Each Chief State Election Official must work with local jurisdictions to develop a free access system that allows military/overseas voters to determine whether their absentee ballot was received by the appropriate State Election Official.
- Expands the use of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to include all special, primary, and runoff elections for Federal office.
- Requires that Absentee ballots must be sent at least 45 days before the election to any military/overseas voter who has submitted a request by that date. (In 2010, 45 days before the November 2nd Election is Saturday, September 18th.)

The MOVE Act was passed by Congress on October 22, 2009 and signed into law by President Obama on October 28, 2009. It is similar to legislation proposed by Secretary Bysiewicz in 2009.