



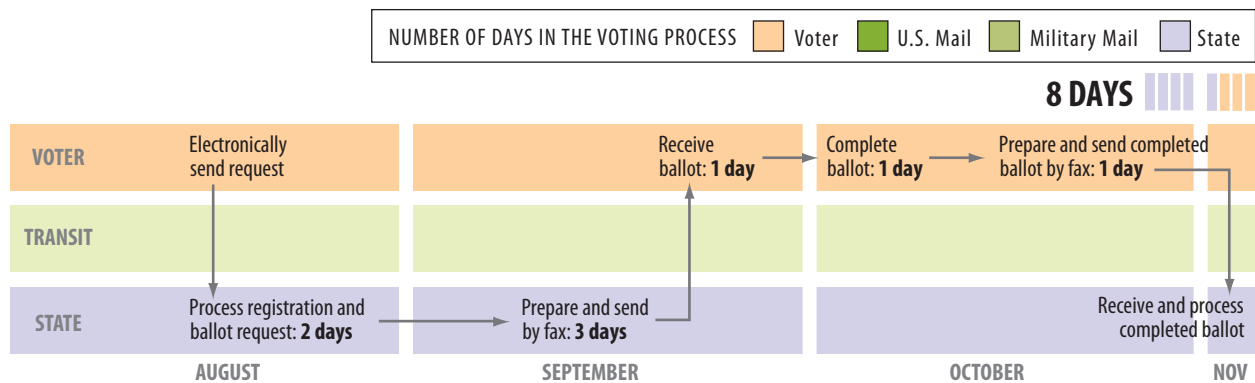
# No Time to Vote: Challenges Facing America's Overseas Military Voters California

To ensure their votes will arrive in time to be counted, overseas military voters from California must return their completed ballots by fax. Electronic submission affords these voters enough time to vote, but it also puts the security and privacy of their ballots at risk. California's overseas military voters could avoid those concerns by returning their ballots using regular postal mail—but then they would not meet the state's deadlines to have their ballots counted. In fact, they would need at least three additional days in the process to have enough time to vote.



**Time to Vote But  
with Concerns**

## THE CURRENT VOTING PROCESS



California already allows blank ballots to be faxed to overseas military voters so that they get their election materials much faster. Since these voters may not have easy access to fax machines, the state could consider sending blank ballots by e-mail or other electronic means (such as through a Web site). To enable these voters to return completed ballots by postal mail, rather than fax, in time to have their votes count, California would need to send out its ballots earlier, extend the deadline by which completed ballots must be received to be counted or a combination of the two steps that will add at least three days to the process.

## SOLUTIONS

### POSSIBLE FIX

### DOES IT PROVIDE ENOUGH TIME TO VOTE?

SEND BLANK BALLOTS OUT EARLIER AND ACCEPT COMPLETED BALLOTS LATER	YES	TIME TO VOTE
ALLOW MINIMUM 45-DAY TRANSIT TIME FOR BALLOTS	YES	TIME TO VOTE
ELIMINATE NOTARY REQUIREMENT	ALREADY IN PLACE	NO CHANGE
ALLOW ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF BLANK BALLOTS	ALREADY IN PLACE	NO CHANGE
EXPAND USE OF FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR STATE AND LOCAL ELECTIONS	YES	TIME TO VOTE

**No Time to Vote:** States that send out their absentee ballots after the date necessary for military overseas voters to have enough time to meet the required deadlines.

**At Risk:** States that provide overseas military voters with only five days or less of extra time to complete the voting process.

**Time to Vote, But with Concerns:** States that provide enough time to vote, but at a price. Overseas military voters from these states have time to vote only if they return their completed ballots by fax or e-mail—practices that raise concerns about voters' privacy and the security of ballots.

**Time to Vote:** States that provide overseas military voters with more than five days of extra time—that is, time beyond the absolute minimum needed to return a completed ballot—to allow for any delays in the voting process.



The Pew Charitable Trusts applies the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Our Pew Center on the States identifies and advances effective policy approaches to critical issues facing states.

901 E Street NW | Washington, DC 20004 | [www.pewcenteronthestates.org](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org)