

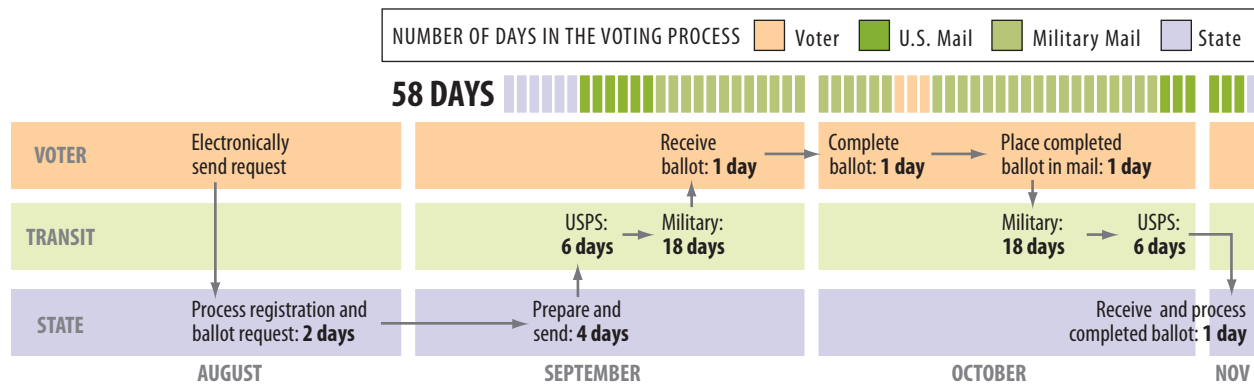


# No Time to Vote: Challenges Facing America's Overseas Military Voters Massachusetts

Massachusetts sends out blank ballots to its overseas military voters on October 14, which is later than every other state except Rhode Island. While Massachusetts allows military voters abroad to request ballots by fax, the state requires that ballots be sent to and returned from these voters by postal mail. Because the time needed for ballots to travel by mail takes longer than the time Massachusetts provides in its process, its military voters abroad would need at least 27 additional days to have enough time to vote.



## THE CURRENT VOTING PROCESS



Massachusetts could follow the lead of 32 other states and send blank ballots to overseas military voters by fax, e-mail or other electronic means (such as through a Web site). This change would help voters get their ballots much faster and give them more time to return their completed ballots by postal mail. Still, even with that reform, the state's military voters abroad would have a cushion of fewer than five days to accommodate any delays in the process—putting them at risk of not having enough time to vote. To help address this problem, Massachusetts could send out blank ballots to voters earlier in the process, 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 27 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	NO	NO CHANGE
ELIMINATE NOTARY REQUIREMENT	ALREADY IN PLACE	NO CHANGE
ALLOW ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF BLANK BALLOTS	YES	AT RISK
EXPAND USE OF FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR STATE AND LOCAL ELECTIONS	ALREADY IN PLACE	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.



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