

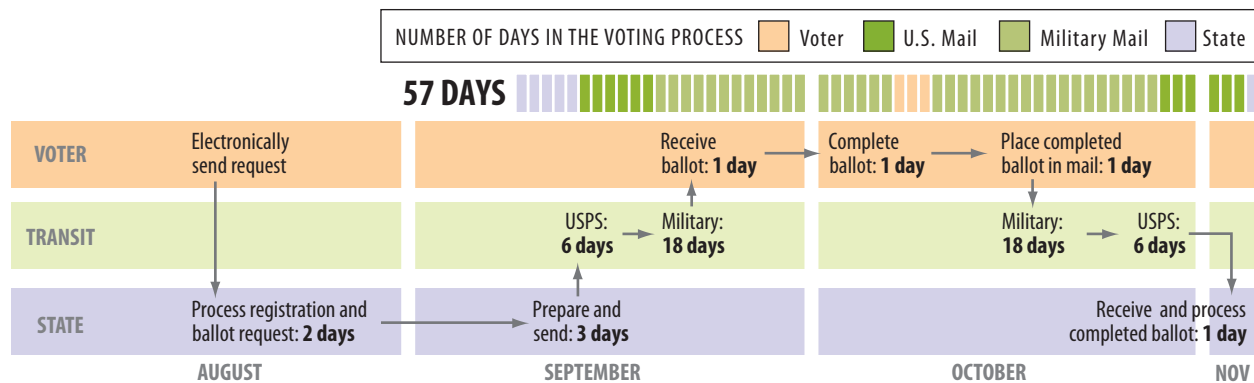


No Time to Vote: Challenges Facing America's Overseas Military Voters Michigan

Overseas military voters from Michigan can fax their ballot requests—but the state requires the ballots to be transmitted to and from voters by postal mail. Because the time needed for ballots to travel by mail takes longer than the time Michigan provides in its process, its military voters abroad would need 13 additional days to have enough time to vote.



THE CURRENT VOTING PROCESS



One step Michigan could take to ensure these voters have enough time to vote is to send them blank ballots 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. The state also 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 13 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	ALREADY IN PLACE	NO CHANGE
ELIMINATE NOTARY REQUIREMENT	ALREADY IN PLACE	NO CHANGE
ALLOW ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF BLANK BALLOTS	YES	TIME TO VOTE
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.



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.

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