



The National Defense Committee

www.NationalDefenseCommittee.org

Friday, June 20, 2008

Letter to the Editor
Montgomery Advertiser
P.O. Box 1000
Montgomery, AL 36101-1000

Dear Sir/Madam,

The National Defense Committee, a grass roots military rights advocacy organization, salutes Secretary Chapman for her steadfast commitment to military voting rights, and to her numerous imaginative initiatives to improve military voting.

And improvement it desperately needs. The Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) 79% military voting participation rate figure is just dead wrong. The Government Accountability Office reviewed FVAP's calculations and found them very poor and leading to a gross overestimation of voter participation. FVAP itself admits its voter participation rates include those who tried to vote, whether or not they were successful.

The sad fact is that despite more almost 660,000 military personnel requesting absentee ballots in 2006, only 175,000 got to cast them. More than 484,000 military personnel requesting absentee ballots were denied that right. For the general population, 85% of requested absentee ballots are cast, but for only 26% of the military's requested absentee ballots are cast.

Why? Because the laws for military voters are too complex, because states don't send out absentee ballots in time for military voters to vote them, and because many states refuse any electronic support of military voting. 13 states will e-mail blank ballots to military voters, but not Alabama.

Why not? Secretary Chapman has tried to fix this problem, but is hamstrung by a lethargic legislature. Meanwhile, Alabama's 18,000 military voters and 14,000 accompanying family members risk losing their right to vote. Alabama needs to join Secretary Chapman in the 21st Century and support electronic voting for military voters.

Sincerely

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