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FAWCO US Liaison
Washington Update Bulletin



FAWCO thanks
Clements International
for its continued support
at our annual
**Overseas Americans
Week**

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FAWCO Washington Update

Dear Kathleen,

A post-July 4th and Bastille Day and pre-Labor Day hello to you all...

I was fortunate enough in July to go to Chicago where a **historic vote** took place.

As many of you will remember, with help from a grant from Pew Charitable Trusts and guidance from the Pew Center on the States, the Uniform Law Commission (originator of laws that apply across state borders, like the Uniform Commercial Code and the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, governing organ donations) accepted in 2008 to take a look at the plight of military and overseas voters.

You may not realize just how historic this was:

The Constitution leaves decisions as to how elections are to be conducted to the states; states fiercely protective of "states rights" defend that prerogative "to the death".

The result, as most of you know, is that the rules governing the way I vote in CT5 may differ wildly from those governing the way my next-door neighbor votes in VA10, and even more importantly, may allow my child to vote while my next-door neighbor's child cannot...

All this may soon become a thing of the past, thanks to an **unprecedented initiative on the part of the Uniform Law Commission**, which agreed to see how it might be possible to create a uniform act covering UOCAVA voters (UOCAVA: the 1975 act covering military and overseas voters, for federal elections only). Unlike UOCAVA, their Act - **UMOVA (the Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act)** - extends to state and local elections.

Please click [here](#) to learn a little more about the act and its drafters. It has been my privilege to work with the ULC Drafting Committee for the last 2 years: FAWCO's perspective, that of civilian overseas voters, has been very helpful, alongside that of the many other stakeholders, in drafting the model Act, and the lawyers on the drafting committee were good enough to give us an active role.

THE NEXT STEP IS UP TO YOU!

UMOVA must now be presented to individual State Houses and adopted before it can actually take effect. This process could take from a most expeditious two years to a languishing ten.

If you want to *contribute to improving voting procedures for overseas Americans in time for the 2012 elections*, stay tuned! I will give you all information I receive from the Drafting Committee about the coming legislative calendar, in time to ask *you* from Michigan, and *you* from Utah, and *you* from Florida, and *you* from California... to help convince your state legislators of the importance of this landmark Act. I am also hoping for the active participation of FAUSA members, right there on the ground...

Thank you - please keep an eye on the FAWCO home page and your bulletins, for updates on how *you* - and you - and *you* - can contribute to the nation-wide enactment of the Uniform Military and Overseas Voter Act!!

Thank you for everything you can do to help!

Lucy

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