



## Operation BRAVO F o u n d a t i o n

July 12, 2009

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Chairman, Committee on Rules & Administration  
United States Senate  
305 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Re: Senate Hearing on S.1415, the "Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act"  
Wednesday, July 15, 2009 9:30 a.m.

Dear Chairman Schumer:

Operation BRAVO Foundation is pleased to register its support for the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act. You and the co-sponsors, Senators Chambliss and Nelson (NE), have clearly listened to the concerns of UOCAVA voters. Your bill proposes new solutions for a wide range of systemic problems that have prevented large numbers of these citizens from voting.

Operation BRAVO Foundation (OBF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization. OBF was established for the purpose of helping overseas and military citizens effectively exercise their right to vote. To this end, we foster the exploration of promising electronic voting alternatives through pilot projects. Our board of directors has extensive firsthand experience with overseas voting issues from our work as elections officials and managers of electronic voting projects, as well as being UOCAVA voters ourselves.

OBF's first project was the 2008 Okaloosa Distance Balloting Pilot which we managed on behalf of the Okaloosa Supervisor of Elections and in accordance with the procedural and security requirements specified by the State of Florida. This project placed supervised voting kiosks in three overseas locations. These sites operated much like early voting centers in the U.S. Voters came to the kiosk and were checked in by a kiosk worker. They used a touch screen to make their ballot selections and could review a paper record of their choices before casting their ballot electronically. Ninety-three military and civilian voters participated.

Here are some typical comments from these voters about their experience:

'This is a great way to make military families feel part of the election process!'

'Easier than the absentee ballot.'

'This establishes my confidence that my vote will be received in time for the election.'

'I trust the Internet more than the postal service.'

'For the first time in my entire voting life, I have the opportunity to cast my ballot in person. Many thanks!'

This pilot was small scale and designed as a technical and security proof of concept. Several e-voting critics have acknowledged that we achieved our goal of successfully implementing a

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remote electronic voting system with acceptable security and auditability. So the groundwork has been done to take the kiosk concept to the next level.

For the 2010 election OBF proposes a follow-on project with a larger number of states and counties. This project will place kiosks in the challenging environments of combat zone locations, such as the Green Zone in Baghdad. The Okaloosa Pilot showed that the entire kiosk system can be shipped in, set up, and operated by personnel with less than 8 hours of training. It requires only a nominal size room, electricity, and an Internet connection. Instead of sending kiosk workers from the U.S., we would utilize Voting Assistance Officers or other personnel already on site. The Combat Zone Kiosk project will be the proof of concept for determining the scalability and cost effectiveness of this voting method as well as the practical feasibility of deployment and operation in areas where it is most needed. This project includes all the elements of Section 13 (c) (2): Virtual private networks, cryptographic voting systems, centrally controlled voting stations, and other information security techniques. Several States and counties have indicated they would like to participate in this project. The only impediment to moving ahead is funding.

Consequently, OBF has two recommendations regarding S.1415. We propose that the regularly scheduled general election for Federal office in 2010 be made the effective date for the Section 13 Technology Pilot Program. This is consistent with the effective date provisions for other sections of the bill. Similarly, we propose that (e) Authorization of Appropriations be revised to read: 'For fiscal year 2010 and subsequent fiscal years, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.'

Operation BRAVO Foundation offers our sincere appreciation to you and other members of the Rules Committee for all your work in improving our elections.

Respectfully,  
Operation BRAVO Foundation  
Board of Directors

Pat Hollarn  
Chip Levengood  
Carol A. Paquette  
Gary Smith