



**U. S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**  
VOTING SYSTEM TESTING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM  
1335 East West Highway, Suite 4300  
Silver Spring, MD 20910



**DEFENSE HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY**  
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 03J25-02  
Alexandria, VA 22350-4000

**SENT VIA EMAIL AND POST**

December 21, 2015

Megan J. Brennan  
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington DC 20260

Postmaster General Brennan,

The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) are writing to offer our assistance to the United States Postal Service (USPS) to better engage State and local election officials regarding the challenges surrounding postal voting. Voting by mail has become an essential element of voting in America, especially for those voters away from home like our military and overseas voters. In the last presidential election, almost six and a half million voters used the mail to cast their ballots.

As the reliance on mail ballots increases, election officials' need for reliable distribution and processing of those ballots increases. In their most recent election, Summit County, Ohio could not count approximately 900 absentee ballots due to a lack of a post mark/cancellation. More and more election jurisdictions are reporting these kinds of challenges with postal ballots. Specifically, election officials cite four main issues with vote-by-mail ballots:

1. **Ballot Delivery** – Challenges with the class of service required for the ballots; associated limitations on the use of intelligent mail barcode that impede ballot tracking for many voters; and consistent timing of delivery.
2. **Ballot Return** – Inconsistencies in local information provided to election officials depending upon which post office they visit and the timeliness of delivery; changes in the postal service's delivery methods causing late ballot deliveries; and the use of Business Reply Mail resulting in additional delays for ballot return.
3. **Postmarking** – Inconsistency with the application of a postmark/cancellation on election mail which may result in the rejection of ballots under State law.

4. **Changing Infrastructure** – The consolidation of post offices and new load leveling requirements contributing to delays in ballot delivery and increased transit times for ballots.

For voters across the country, no piece of mail is more important than their ballot. Many Service members and their families stationed across the world rely on the postal service to ensure their ballot is delivered in time to have their vote counted. We think you will agree that we can – and must – do better.

The EAC and FVAP remain ready to work with USPS to share these reports and inform any decisions by USPS necessary to protect the integrity of our election system as we approach the 2016 election season. We would like to request a meeting between our three agencies to discuss preparedness for 2016. Please send along your designated point-of-contact to EAC Executive Director Brian Newby (bnewby@eac.gov).

We appreciate your already stated commitment to improving these services. Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to work with us on these important issues to better serve the voters of America.

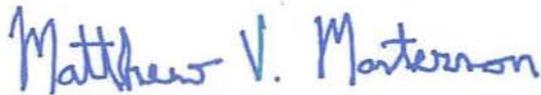
Sincerely,



Christy A. McCormick  
Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission



Thomas Hicks  
Vice Chair, U. S. Election Assistance Commission



Matthew V. Masterson  
Commissioner, U. S. Election Assistance Commission



Matthew Boehmer  
Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program

cc: Daniel Bentley, U.S. Postal Service