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## **Military and Overseas Empowerment Act (MOVE Act)**

In an effort to make sure all military personnel have ample time and opportunity to register and vote in all elections, on October 22, 2009, Congress passed the Military and Overseas Empowerment Act also known as MOVE Act. This new law has a number of elements that benefit military and overseas civilians who in the past experienced voting difficulties due to time constraints and uncertainties with timely mail delivery.

The act requires states to establish procedures for military and overseas voters to request voter registration applications and absentee ballots by mail and electronically, and procedures for transmitting blank ballots by mail or electronically according to the voter's preference. To the extent practicable, these procedures must protect the security and integrity of absentee ballots and the identity

and personal data of voters. It also requires local jurisdictions within states to establish a ballot tracking mechanism so military and overseas voters can ensure their ballots have been received by the elections' office in time to be counted. In anticipation of the MOVE act, this provision is already in place in Pasco County and is available on our website, [pascovotes.com](http://pascovotes.com), to any voter wishing to track their mail-in ballot status.

In addition, the act sets forth provisions for the military's Federal Voting Assistance Program which requires them to designate a voting information office on each installation, maintain a public online database with state voting contact information, voter registration and absentee ballot procedures, and relevant information such as the military voter's local candidates.

As well, procedures for collecting, delivering and returning ballots to overseas active duty or service voters must be established. The United States Postal Service (USPS) in conjunction with the Military Postal Service for the Department of Defense has created an Express Mail label unique to absentee ballots originating from overseas military postal locations. The Express Mail label enables overseas voters to track the return of their absentee ballot and ensures timely delivery.

For the upcoming election cycle, Pasco County is in total compliance with the MOVE act, and although it has had little impact on our already-established procedures for military voters, the act addresses problems that have occurred in past Federal Elections and seeks to unify procedures nationwide.