



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SECRETARY OF STATE HUSTED ANNOUNCES NEW MILITARY VOTE
OUTREACH INITIATIVE**

Ohio National Guard Brigadier General Robert Clouse, State Representative Mike Dovilla and Ohio Department of Veterans Services Tom Moe join Secretary Husted for program launch.

COLUMBUS – Secretary of State Jon Husted today announced the launch of a new program, Military Ready-to-Vote (MRV), a program designed to make it easier for military personnel to vote while in service to our country.

“The brave men and women of our armed services often endure great personal sacrifice to defend the freedoms we enjoy, not the least of which is our right to vote,” Secretary Husted said. “The MRV program will help ensure Ohioans serving in the military are able to remain active participants in our democracy regardless of where they are stationed during an election.”

Based on information from Ohio’s 88 county boards of elections, during the 2010 General Election, there were 5,670 military absentee ballots requested and sent out statewide, of which, 2,509 were actually cast. Secretary Husted’s objective for MRV is to make it easier for soldiers who are Ohio residents to know what they need to do to participate and have their votes be part of the tally on Election Day.

Through the MRV program, Ohio soldiers on active duty can register and vote, get reminders about upcoming elections and important deadlines, and get other voting questions answered all in one place. More specifically, soldiers who will be on active duty during an election will be able to request an MRV packet, which will allow them to register to vote and request an absentee ballot for all elections in one calendar year, using the same, Federal Post Card Application form. Under Ohio law, military absentee ballots are mailed out 45 days prior to the election.

“As a U.S. Navy veteran, I am pleased to be working with Secretary Husted on the Military Ready-to-Vote, Ohio program,” said State Representative Mike Dovilla. “Our objective in advancing this project is to ensure that our deployed troops are able to exercise one of our most important civic duties: the right and responsibility to vote.”

Recognizing that today’s soldiers effectively utilize technology to stay connected, the Secretary of State’s office, through the MRV program, will enable Ohio military personnel to sign up for electronic reminders via email and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Additional information, such as finding out what issues and races will appear on a ballot and viewing election results will be available online via OhioMilitaryVotes.com. To help ensure each vote is counted, soldiers will also be able to track their completed ballots to ensure they were received and counted by local county board of elections.

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Knowing the success of the MRV program is largely dependent upon the ability to get this information into the hands of Ohioans serving in the military, Secretary Husted is working with the Ohio National Guard and Department of Veteran's Services to utilize their communication channels, as well as to meet personally with soldiers preparing for deployment.

"This initiative could not be more timely as Ohio prepares to deploy over 2,200 Guard members this fall in support of Operation Enduring Freedom," Ohio National Guard Brigadier General Robert Clouse said. "This would benefit our Soldiers and Airmen who are serving abroad on Election Day."

"We were happy to partner with the Secretary of State on this important initiative," Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director Thomas Moe said. "We should do all that we can to make it easier for our deployed troops – the veterans of tomorrow – to participate in our system of government."

Additionally, Secretary Husted is reaching out to various military advocacy groups to partner with on the MRV initiative to more effectively connect with Ohio's military personnel and their families.

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