



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Mark R. Warner
Governor

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**GOVERNOR WARNER ANNOUNCES EXPEDITED ABSENTEE
VOTING FOR VIRGINIANS ASSISTING IN HURRICANE RELIEF**
~ Existing program expanded to include qualified Virginia voters in the Gulf region ~

RICHMOND—Governor Mark R. Warner today announced the expansion of Virginia’s Emergency Military Absentee Voting Program to include the hundreds of Virginia residents stationed, living, visiting or engaged in disaster relief in states affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Under the Emergency Military Absentee Voting Program, absentee ballots are e-mailed or faxed to the voter.

“We’re not sure exactly how many Virginians this will help, but we know hundreds of our citizens have traveled to the Gulf Coast region to be of assistance,” said Governor Warner. “With this action, qualified Virginia voters will get to vote in the November general election while continuing to help the Gulf states recover from one of the worst disasters in American history.”

Under the expanded program, qualified Virginia voters may e-mail or fax their request for an absentee ballot to their local registrar’s office and receive the ballot and return envelope via e-mail or fax. The voter will fill out the ballot and return it via mail or commercial delivery service to their local registrar’s office in Virginia. This method is expected to dramatically reduce the time it takes for qualified Virginia voters to cast their absentee ballots, especially considering some hurricane-affected areas are still under a mail embargo.

All Virginia localities will be required to participate in the expanded absentee voting program.

"I appreciate Governor Warner's timely help and leadership on this issue," said Sen. Walter A. Stosch, who wrote the Governor urging this action. "Just as with our troops serving overseas, the State Board of Elections has found a sensible solution to the unique voting situation of many of our National Guard personnel, emergency workers, and volunteers who are helping their fellow Americans in the Gulf Coast."

To participate in the program, the voter must:

- Be a current registered voter in Virginia.
- Be stationed, living, visiting or engaged in disaster relief in parts of the Gulf region affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.
- Request the absentee ballot from the voter's local registrar's office using one of the following applications: Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) or Virginia Absentee Ballot Application.
- Provide the local registrar's office with a current, working e-mail address or fax number on the completed absentee ballot application.
- Record the name of the city and state, and if known, the zip code of the location where the voter is currently stationed, living, visiting or engaged in disaster relief in parts of the Gulf region affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, on the completed absentee ballot application.
- Send the completed application to the local registrar's office in the city or county where the voter's Virginia residence is located.

Absentee ballot applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Thursday, November 3, 2005.

“Many Virginians volunteered their time by deploying to the Gulf Coast states to personally assist their fellow citizens in every imaginable capacity,” said Jean Jensen, Secretary of the State Board of Elections. “Recognizing that many of the deployed Virginians will have limited access to standard mail delivery, this expedited e-mail program will give our citizens an opportunity to vote in the November election.”

For more information on absentee voting and to download the FPCA or the Virginia Absentee Ballot Application, visit www.sbe.virginia.gov.

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