THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

AUG 5 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Opportunity to Vote During the 2004 Elections

For the men and women of our Uniformed Services, the opportunity to register and cast their ballots in the 2004 elections will depend significantly on the assistance and support they receive through Service and command voting programs and from the Voting Assistance Officers assigned to their units. On March 17, 2004, I sent you a memorandum emphasizing steps to be taken to ensure that our voting assistance efforts are effective and that our men and women in uniform are well served through our voting assistance programs. I want you to review that memorandum as a tool to assess your voting assistance programs leading up to the November election. Additionally, I want to emphasize the following:

- Encourage top-level involvement in the voting process throughout every level of command. Verify that your voting programs are in place and that they are working.
- During field visits, the Deputy, Chairman and Vice-Chairman will ask who is assigned as the Voting Assistance Officer for that installation or command and they will want to speak to them. One question that will be asked is: "What are the metrics against which you are rated in the performance of your duties as a Voting Assistance Officer?"
- The U.S. Postal Service and the Military Postal Service Agency will implement special mail handling procedures to expedite delivery of election materials during the period preceding the November election. I want you to ensure that this mail is delivered quickly to individual service members once it arrives at the unit level, especially to those members who are serving in detached locations.

During the September Combatant Commander Conference, I expect each of you to report on the activities and initiatives you have implemented within your organizations to ensure our service members have the opportunity to cast their ballots.

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