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100 W. Randolph Street
Suite 14-100
Chicago, Illinois 60601
312-814-6440
312-814-6431 (TTY)

2329 S. MacArthur Blvd.
Springfield, Illinois 62704
217-782-4141
(TTY) 217-782-1518
www.elections.il.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: JIM TENUTO
312-814-6440

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

Chicago IL, January 11, 2013 – The Illinois State Board of Elections today announced an extension of the deadlines for accepting absentee ballots for military and U. S. citizens living overseas who intend to vote in the Second Congressional District Special Election.

Under the terms of a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice, approved in federal court on January 11, 2013, the following deadlines will apply for the February 26, 2013, Special Primary Election and April 9, 2013, Special Election.

February 26, 2013, Special Primary Election

- Military and overseas voters in the Second Congressional District who participate in the February 26, 2013, Special Primary Election must vote and postmark their ballots by midnight on February 25, 2013. Ballots must be received by March 6, 2013, or, if received electronically (by email or facsimile) by 7:00 p.m. CST on Election Day.

April 9, 2013, Special Election

- Military and overseas voters in the Second Congressional District who participate in the April 9, 2013, Special Election must vote and postmark their ballots by midnight of April 8, 2013. Ballots must be received by April 23, 2013, or if received electronically (by email or facsimile) by 7:00 p.m. CST on Election Day.

The Department of Justice's lawsuit was brought to enforce provisions of the Uniformed and the Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. This lawsuit arises from the provisions of the Illinois Election Code which requires the Governor to issue a writ of election within five (5) days following the vacancy setting a date within 115 days to hold a special election when a vacancy occurs in the office of a Representative of Congress.

Representative Jesse Jackson, Jr. resigned from Congress on November 21, 2012. This consent decree applies to the Special Primary Election to be held February 26, 2013 and Special Election to be held on April 9, 2013, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. and is the only Federal office on those ballots.

The last day to file petitions was January 7, 2013, and the last day to file challenges to the candidate's petitions is January 14, 2013. The State expects challenges to candidate's petitions to be filed on or before the January 14, 2013 deadline.

The State has represented that it will certify a ballot to go out to UOCAVA voters on January 15, 2013.

Additional provisions of the consent decree include:

- By January 15, 2013 the State must ensure transmittal of an official absentee ballot to each UOCAVA voter who has applied for an absentee ballot on or before January 15, 2013, accompanied by a notice identifying the candidate challenges. This notice will provide that such challenges will be adjudicated by the State Board of Elections no later than January 30, 2013, and advising voters of possible judicial review of any such challenges.
- By January 31, 2013, the State must ensure expedited transmittal to each UOCAVA voter of a notice of the final list of candidates who will appear on the ballot for the February 26, 2013, Special Primary Election according to the determination of the State Board of Elections.
- By March 8, 2013, the State must ensure transmittal to each UOCAVA voter who has applied for an absentee ballot.
- The State must ensure expedited transmittal of all UOCAVA ballots for both the February 26, 2013, Special Primary Election and April 9, 2013, Special Election according to the preference of the voter (by mail, email or facsimile). For those voters who requested that their ballot be sent by mail, the State shall send the ballot by express mail delivery.
- The State must permit all UOCAVA voters the option of returning their marked ballots by express mail at no expense to the voter, or by electronic means, including electronic mail, facsimile, and the on-line marking and return system available to UOCAVA voters in the City of Chicago and Cook County.
- The parties will confer after the January 14, 2013 deadline to file challenges. If it appears that due to the number or complexity of the challenges the process for resolving petition challenges will not be completed by January 30, 2013, the parties may seek appropriate modification of the decree or further relief from the court.
- For purposes of this decree, the parties understand that although the local election authorities will continue to send, receive and count UOCAVA ballots as provided in state law, as well as provide individual notice to voters, the state bears the responsibility of ensuring that the requirements of UOCAVA and this consent decree are met.

The Second Congressional District is comprised of portions of the City of Chicago, suburban Cook County, Kankakee County and Will County. Military and overseas voters with specific questions about the absentee voting process should contact the election authority within their jurisdiction.

Voters may also contact Cris Cray with the State Board of Elections for assistance. Cris Cray's email address is ccray@elections.il.gov or she can be reached at (217) 782-4141.

In addition, the SBE has established a MOVE link on its website, <http://www.elections.il.gov/VotingInformation/Military.aspx>, where military and overseas voters may apply to register to vote and make application for an absentee ballot and can check the status of their voter registration and absentee ballot application and ballot.

Military and overseas voters who feel their ballots will not reach them in time may wish to cast a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, which can be obtained at the *Federal Voting Assistance Program*. The deadlines described above also apply to military and overseas voters who choose to submit the Federal Write-In Absentee back – up ballot.

The State Board of Elections would like to acknowledge and thank the U.S. Justice Department, the Illinois Attorney General's office and the local election authorities for their cooperation and assistance.

A complete copy of the consent decree is also available on the Board's website at www.elections.il.gov.

The State Board of Elections is an independent state agency charged with the responsibility of having general supervision over the administration of election laws of the State. Elections are administered locally by the State's 110 election authorities.

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