



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Craig M. Johnson

State Senate Passes Legislation to Protect Votes of Soldiers and Other Overseas Americans

CRAIG M. JOHNSON July 26, 2009

Important legislation that will make it significantly easier for military and overseas voters to cast a ballot, better ensuring that their vote will count, recently passed the State Senate and was quickly signed into law, Senator Craig M. Johnson (D-Nassau) said.

This measure, (S.5595), extends the time in which an absentee ballot can be received after an election. Now, all ballots will be counted that are received by the Board of Elections for seven days following a primary election, or 13 days following a general or special election.

Additionally, for the first time ever, voters overseas will be able to fax or e-mail their request for an absentee ballot. Previously, it could take as long as 75 days from the time an overseas voter requested an absentee ballot to the time their vote was actually received. That limited time frame and the lengthy absentee ballot mailing process has proven to be unreasonably restrictive as any delay for ballots traveling thousands of miles could result in that vote being thrown out.

“These brave men and women put their lives on the line everyday to protect our freedom,” Senator Johnson said. “I am proud to have had the opportunity to help better protect their right to participate in the democratic process.”

According to a recent report done by the office of U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer, over 8,000 troops from New York were deprived in the most recent elections of their fundamental right to vote because the lengthy mailing process meant many ballots did not arrive in time to be counted.

The legislation, which had also passed the Assembly, was signed by the governor soon after its passage in the Senate.