



## Congress of the United States

November 2, 2006

Committee on Education  
and the Workforce

Permanent Select Committee  
on Intelligence

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy

Co-Chair

Children's Environmental Health Caucus  
Member

Congressional Arts Caucus

Internet Caucus

Law Enforcement Caucus

Historic Preservation Caucus

Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld  
U.S. Department of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1155

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld,

The sanctity and security our service members' votes must be protected. For that reason, I was greatly relieved when the Department of Defense canceled its internet voting pilot project, known as the Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment (SERVE), early in 2004. An in-depth security review by computer security experts revealed SERVE's many risks and vulnerabilities.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Department of Defense may be putting our service member's franchise at risk yet again. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is a well-intentioned effort to make voting as convenient as possible for our military personnel stationed overseas. However, according to David Jefferson, Avi Rubin, Barbara Simons, and David Wagner – the security team that analyzed the SERVE project – the FVAP is using an Interim Voting Assistance System (IVAS) that is fundamentally flawed. For example:

1. Tool One exposes soldiers to risks of identity theft. Sending personally identifiable information via unencrypted email is considered poor practice and exposes soldiers to risks of identity theft. No bank would ask their customers to send SSNs over unencrypted email, yet the IVAS does exactly that. This problem is exacerbated by potential "phishing" attacks.
2. Returning voted ballots by email or fax creates an opportunity for hackers, foreign governments, or other parties to tamper with those ballots while they are in transit. FVAP's system does not include any meaningful protection against the risk of ballot modification during fax or e-mail transmission.
3. Ballots returned by email or fax may be handled by the DoD in some cases. Those overseas voters using the system sign a waiver of their right to a secret ballot. However, it is one thing for a voter's ballot to be sent directly to their local election official; it is another for a soldier's ballot to be sent to and handled by the DoD – who is, after all, the soldier's employer.

I fervently hope that all service personnel will participate in the democratic process and vote in the upcoming election. It does them little good, however, if we extend the franchise to them with one hand (through rapid access to ballots), yet take it away with the other (by denying them their right to a secret ballot and failing to protect the security of their votes).

I have attached for your personal review the technical review of the IVAS by four computer experts. I ask for your comment on it, and request that you direct the FVAP to take whatever measures are necessary to provide our Armed Forces with a voting process that is secure, private, accessible, auditable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rush Holt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress