



THE FEDERATION OF AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUBS OVERSEAS, INC.
Founded 1931

May 22, 2009

The Honorable Robert A. Brady, Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Cc: Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Mike Honda

Re: HR 1739, the Overseas Voting Practical Amendments Act of 2009

Dear Chairman Brady,

On behalf of the over 15,000 members of my federation, with 75 independent member organizations in 37 countries around the world, I am writing in support of HR 1739, introduced by Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Mike Honda, which is, among a number of bills recently introduced which propose important improvements to voting procedures, the only one which specifically addresses the obstacles faced by America's large military and overseas voting population, recently estimated by Michael McDonald, Professor of Public and International Affairs at George Mason University, at 4,972,217.

As I said in the statement by 3 of our overseas organizations submitted to the May 21 Elections Subcommittee hearing, FAWCO has been active in supporting and working for voting rights for overseas Americans since 1931, and we are delighted at the many recent changes that have been made, with the Help America Vote Act, to facilitate voting by UOCAVA voters. Unfortunately barriers remain, the most important being the time needed to send out ballots and return them in time to be counted, certain requirements for eligibility which can often not be met by voters outside the country, and the disenfranchisement of certain segments of the overseas population.

Our colleagues at ACA have written to you in great and very helpful detail (American Citizens Abroad letter of May 20) and I do not need to repeat here their excellent review of the constructive changes proposed in HR 1739.

I wish simply to urge you and your colleagues on the Committee on House Administration to look favorably on this bill, understanding that from the perspective of the overseas voter, it can resolve many of the remaining barriers for UOCAVA voters.

As always, we look forward to working with your staff and your colleagues in any constructive way we can to craft legislation that can ensure that those who serve America around the world, in the military and in the business, academic, religious and non-profit communities, can participate in the democratic process in the most streamlined and secure manner possible.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Stensland Laederich, FAWCO U.S. Liaison