

April 12, 2021

Dear Senator Durbin,

Americans abroad support groups appreciate the opportunity to request an amendment to S1, the For the People Act, which would enfranchise US citizen children of military and civilian families born abroad so that they may vote in federal elections in the US.

The aim of the amendment is to fix a gap in the overseas federal voter law, UOCAVA, which specifies that US citizens abroad may vote in federal elections, but does not provide clarification that US citizens abroad also include US citizens born abroad.

While 36 states and the District of Columbia allow US citizens born abroad who have never resided in their state to vote based on their parent's former residency there, 15 states take advantage of that gap to disenfranchise some or all of these citizens.

The 14 states that do not recognize the Federal voting rights of US Citizens born overseas who have not lived in the United States are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois¹, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Oregon², Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah.

Our suggested amendment clarifies the definition of overseas US citizen voter to include never resided Americans, defining their voter residency state based on their parent(s) residency immediately prior to moving abroad. This clarification aligns the federal definition of an overseas voter with the definition used by the majority of states and the District of Columbia.

For more information about this issue, as well as suggested amendment language, please [review this slide deck](#).

Sincerely yours,

Julia Bryan
Global Chair, Democrats Abroad

¹ A US citizen who has never resided in the US is eligible to vote in Illinois if they are a military dependent and their parent or parents last resided in Illinois prior to deployment abroad.

² A U.S. citizen who has never resided in the U.S. is eligible to vote only if they indicate they intend to reside in Oregon and have a parent, legal guardian, or spouse that is a military or overseas voter under Oregon law, and that parent, legal guardian, or spouse last resided in Oregon and the parent, etc must also indicate that they intend to return