

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2007

They pay taxes... They vote... Shouldn't they hear from you?

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to call your attention to a problem facing the 3-6 million American citizens who live and work abroad or serve in the military. As co-chairs of the Americans Abroad Caucus, we are familiar with their frustration when they are unable to contact their elected officials

As you may know, many Americans who live abroad continue to vote and pay taxes in the United States. According to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), even when these citizens do not have a current domestic street address, they are assigned to congressional districts, the last in which they resided, for voting and representation purposes. Unfortunately, many of these constituents often have to struggle to have their representatives in Congress respond to them. Constituent letters with foreign addresses are often quickly discarded or forwarded even when the text of the letter explains that they are indeed constituents. In addition to upsetting constituents who feel they are being ignored, these misunderstandings often prevent overseas constituents from obtaining timely casework services.

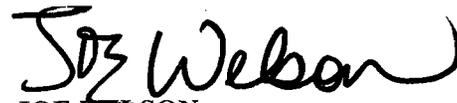
In order for your constituents who reside overseas or are serving in the military to contact your office, we would urge you to take the following steps:

1. The leaders of overseas citizen advocacy organizations regularly advise members of their organizations to begin their letters by reminding Members that they do vote in their district. Please alert your Legislative Correspondent to watch closely for letters that begin in this manner.
2. Please ensure that your website enables overseas U.S. citizens to submit their information and concerns online to you. You may visit Representative Maloney's website for an example of how to change your "Contact Me" page (http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_email_form&Itemid=73).

For more information, please contact Jennifer Keaton with Representative Maloney at 5-7944 or Paul Callahan with Representative Wilson at 5-2452.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


JOE WILSON
Member of Congress