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GOP Reps. Present Bill to Create Electronic Voting System for Military Members Serving Overseas

Members of the military who are serving overseas have to jump through several hoops in order to cast a vote. Often times, if they even receive a ballot, their votes don't make it back to the state in time to be counted. Republican State Representatives Marsha Looper, R-Calhan, and David Balmer, R-Centennial, want to change that by creating a pilot program that allows Colorado soldiers serving overseas the ability to register and cast their votes electronically.

"While our troops are protecting our democracy, it is important that we do everything possible to protect their right to vote," said Looper. "After reviewing the voting process for soldiers, I was astounded by the level of difficulty they face in order to cast a vote."

House Bill 1205 would make voting easier for military members serving overseas, by allowing ballot requests and voting to be available via a secure website.

In Colorado, soldiers must request an absentee ballot for a federal election, and then they have to request the absentee ballot from the state. Once they receive their ballot, they have a limited amount of time to send it back.

"This process may not sound like a big deal to someone living in the United States," noted Rep. Balmer, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve. "When you are fighting in a foreign country where there are a million other things on your mind; it can be challenging to meet all the deadlines."

The Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act study of 2007 found that 47 percent of service members who wanted to vote in 2007 never got the chance. The survey also found that of the 992,034 absentee ballots requested in 2006, over 660,000 never reached officials to be counted.

"The numbers are astounding," added Looper. "Passage of this bill will help Colorado develop a plan so our soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, will have their votes counted."

Looper and Balmer will present HB 1205 before the House State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee on Tuesday, February 17, upon afternoon recess in room 112.

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