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**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REACHES AGREEMENT TO PROTECT RIGHTS  
OF MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS IN NEW MEXICO**

ALBUQUERQUE – The Justice Department today announced that it has reached a supplemental agreement with New Mexico officials to help ensure that military service members and U.S. citizens living overseas will have an opportunity to participate fully in the 2012 federal general election cycle. The agreement is part of an ongoing case brought in 2010 to ensure New Mexico’s compliance with the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), which requires states to give uniformed service voters (both overseas and within the United States) and their families and overseas citizens a reasonable opportunity to vote absentee in all Federal elections.

Today’s agreement, which must still be approved by the U.S. District Court in New Mexico, will partially extend a court-ordered consent decree previously entered to remedy New Mexico’s UOCAVA violations during the period leading to the November 2010 federal general election. In accordance with the consent decree, New Mexico recently passed legislation designed to provide more time for local election officials to prepare and transmit absentee ballots to military and overseas voters. Today’s agreement requires New Mexico to closely monitor its counties’ UOCAVA compliance, provide assistance to its counties when necessary, and report back to the United States about its UOCAVA compliance during the 2012 federal election cycle.

“The Justice Department continues to vigorously enforce UOCAVA so that members of the uniformed services, their families and other citizens living overseas are able to exercise their right to vote and know their votes will be counted,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney

General for the Civil Rights Division. “I am pleased that New Mexico has continued to work cooperatively with the department to reach this agreement, which helps ensure that the state’s military and overseas voters can participate fully in upcoming federal elections.”

“Particularly at a time when so many of our military service men and women are in harm’s way while courageously serving their country overseas, it is imperative that they and other overseas citizens have a meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of our nation’s leaders, and to know that their votes will be counted,” said Kenneth J. Gonzales, the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico. “I commend the department’s Civil Rights Division for vigorously enforcing the voting rights of all American citizens, including our service men and women.”

More information about UOCAVA and other federal voting laws is available on the Department of Justice website at [www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/misc/activ\\_uoc.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/misc/activ_uoc.php). Complaints may be reported to the Voting Section of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division at 1-800-253-3931.