

Committee on House Administration
Member Day Testimony
Congressman Maxwell Alejandro Frost (FL-10)

March 4, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on two very important matters that I hope the Committee will prioritize in this 119th Congress.

First, for the second term, I will be introducing legislation called the Voting Overseas Treated Equally for Servicemembers Act, or the VOTES Act. I'm grateful to the Members of the Committee on House Administration for their unanimous support of the VOTES Act when it was marked up last Congress.

The American way of life sits on the shoulders of the brave military servicemembers who protect and defend us day and night. It's not for nothing that folks say we're the land of the free because of the brave.

If you or a family member has served, this country owes you a lot – especially those sent downrange in support of ground operations.

For as long as our nation has fought wars and deployed service members abroad, we have recognized the fundamental right of those in uniform to participate in our democracy. During the Civil War, states pioneered absentee voting to ensure soldiers could cast ballots.

That legacy continues under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) and the MOVE Act, which guaranteed ballot access to *active-duty* servicemembers abroad.

However, the MOVE Act was passed over 15 years ago. Today, it's not just active-duty servicemembers who may be deployed overseas. That guarantee of ballot access might not extend to some of the 760,000 Reserve and National Guard members – many of whom deploy for critical operations, training exercises, and national emergencies.

The VOTES Act corrects this by ensuring all servicemembers serving overseas, regardless of their duty status, receive their ballots in time to vote in federal elections.

This bill is endorsed by the American Legion, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, and the National Guard Association of the United States. I ask that the Committee prioritize advancing this legislation because those who serve our country have a right to have their voices heard.

Second, I would like the Committee to address an issue that would immediately make it easier for members, especially those who come from disaster prone districts, to better serve our constituents.

Congress should allow district offices to use their website and online platforms to direct constituents to community organizations, resources, and services.

When a hurricane hits central Florida, or a tornado tears through Wisconsin, our constituents come to our offices and our websites looking for help. While we can assist our constituents with filing claims for relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, we all know recovery resources from the local level

and led by community groups can provide the most support. As leaders in our community, we are expected to help direct our constituents toward what they need to recover, not just send them home because their issue is not a federal one. As leaders at the highest level of government, we should be able to convene resources in one place, rather than force our constituents to do a copious amount of outreach and research in their time of crisis.

The Committee on House Administration could ensure that this is an option. Not all districts have the same community groups or resources, and every member should be given plenty of leeway in who they include, or if they even participate at all.

This is something the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress investigated and offered as a recommendation to Congress. Just like the Committee passed a resolution authorizing co-sponsored constituent service events, my hope is that we can make this change. I am ready to help.

Thank you for your time and important work.