



OVERALL GOALS

Overseas Americans are estimated to be similar in number to the population of Minnesota - the 21st most populous state. Easily forgotten because they are scattered across the globe, they face a number of particular obstacles. Over the years, Congress has systematically made it more difficult for Americans to live and work overseas. We urge Congress and the Administration to rethink certain policies that restrict their effectiveness as ambassadors for American interests abroad.

OUR MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES THIS YEAR ARE:

- **TAXATION:** If the National Export Initiative is to succeed in doubling exports in 5 years, Americans must be deployed abroad to secure export sales. Tax policy should allow Americans to be fully competitive overseas. Today, U.S. tax policy makes U.S. citizens too expensive for deployment abroad. This is why we support legislation to eliminate the cap on the foreign earned income exclusion.
- **BANKING SERVICES:** FBAR reporting and the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) are making overseas Americans pariahs in the international banking world. Existing U.S.-based accounts are also being closed and new ones refused due to the Patriot Act *Know Your Customer* rules. This seriously hampers the ability of Americans to live and do business overseas, and is contrary to U.S. national interests.
- **VOTING:** Legislation should be introduced to clarify certain provisions of the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act (complete elimination of notarization and witness requirements, clarification that individuals are not required to request a ballot for each election in a year, etc.). Funding should be assured for the Election Assistance Commission to allow it to carry out its mission. No federal election results should be certified until all absentee ballots have been counted.

OTHER ISSUES:

- **CITIZENSHIP:** All Americans should enjoy an equal right to transmit U.S. citizenship to their children at birth, including children born to or adopted by a U.S. citizen abroad. Children born abroad should be defined as "natural born" U.S. citizens.
- **MEDICARE:** Eligible American civilians who retire abroad cannot receive Medicare benefits where they reside and must return to America where medical costs are much higher. Military Veterans retired abroad receive coverage through the Tricare for Life program. A similar program crafted for civilian retirees abroad could ultimately save money for Medicare.

- **REPRESENTATION:** The Executive Branch should establish an Office of Overseas Americans to open up communication and to seek solutions to obstacles facing Americans abroad. Overseas Americans look forward to continued fruitful collaboration with the bipartisan Americans Abroad Caucus and to expanding the Caucus membership in the House and Senate.
- **SOCIAL SECURITY:** The Windfall Elimination Provision unfairly reduces Social Security pension benefits to Americans who have worked abroad and should be repealed. Self-employed overseas Americans should not be required to contribute to U.S. Social Security and Medicare in addition to social security programs where they reside.
- **CONSULAR ACCESS:** Since consular access under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations for U.S. citizens arrested abroad must be a reciprocal right, we support legislation implementing the Supreme Court decision supporting judicial remedies in serious cases for foreigners arrested in the U.S. whose rights under the Convention have been violated. We believe that prompt Congressional action is the most effective way to ensure that other nations respect the essential right of consular access for American citizens detained abroad.

OUR COALITION SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING:

- **CEDAW:** The US Senate should finally ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and ratification should proceed without “Reservations, Declarations and Understandings” (RDUs) that would undermine CEDAW’s meaning and effectiveness.
- **VAWA:** The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 was the first comprehensive federal legislation addressing violence against women in the United States. It continues to provide much-needed funding to help agencies serving victims of domestic violence in the USA. While we support and applaud VAWA legislation, to date, no VAWA funding has been allocated to serve the population of Americans living overseas. We urge Congress to support and champion the inclusion of Americans overseas within the current reauthorization of VAWA.

Overseas Americans Week (OAW) is a coalition that includes the non-partisan, non-profit organizations American Citizens Abroad (ACA), the Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), the Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas, Inc. (FAWCO) and the AmCham Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Regional Council. OAW provides the opportunity to advocate in Washington for all Americans abroad. For more information, please visit www.overseasamericansweek.com



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