



PUBLIC NOTICE

OVERSEAS VOTER REGISTRATION AND VOTING

The Parliamentary Commissioner wishes to inform the public that the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act 2011 makes provisions for Bahamian Citizens to register and to vote from overseas locations. The privilege of registering and voting overseas is extended to certain categories of persons. Persons considered and conditions under which they may register to vote and may vote are listed below:

1. Requirements to Register:

In order to register applicants must meet the same legal requirements, regardless of where they may be residing at the time. They must, on the day of applying be;

- (a) Citizens of The Bahamas of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity; and
- (b) Must have been during the entire period of three months preceding that day, ordinarily resident in premises in that constituency.

For persons who apply for registration from an overseas location, their ordinary residency in a constituency in The Bahamas is considered not to have been interrupted if the person is occasionally or temporarily absent from that place or is absent for a period of time because the person is temporarily overseas.

2. Who can register overseas

- (a) a student, or the spouse accompanying such student, pursuing a *bona fide* programme of study outside of The Bahamas;
- (b) a member of staff of any embassy, high commission or other foreign mission of The Bahamas who is posted overseas, or the spouse or any immediate member of the family living within the household of that member of staff;
- (c) a public officer or a member of staff of the Ministry of Tourism or any delegation of The Bahamas who is on official duty overseas or the spouse of such person or any immediate member of the family living within the household of that member of staff; or
- (d) a member of staff of The Bahamas Maritime Authority or any other agency of the Government of The Bahamas or any international organization to which The Bahamas is accredited or the spouse of such person or any immediate member of the family living within the household of that member of staff.

Persons applying to register overseas may do so at any embassy, high commission, or any other foreign mission of The Bahamas provided that he is otherwise qualified to register in accordance with the Law.

For purposes of the above a person's address in The Bahamas shall be the last address at which the person resided prior to his departure.

Please note that this section does not apply to persons who are domiciled overseas even though they may be in the employ of The Bahamas Government. Residency in a constituency in the Bahamas is crucial.

Applicants for registration under this section must satisfy the Revising Officer that he meets the criteria for registration. The Revising Officer shall require such proof that will assist him in determining that the person is in the category of persons described in section 49 A(1) of the Parliamentary Elections Act. A student for example, will be required to prove that he is currently a student.

3. Who may enroll as an overseas voter.

Any person who at the time of the issue of a writ of election is-

- (a) a student, or the spouse accompanying such student, pursuing a *bona fide* programme of study outside of The Bahamas;
- (b) a member of staff of any embassy, high commission or other foreign mission of The Bahamas who is posted overseas, or the spouse or any immediate member of the family living within the household of that member of staff;
- (c) a public officer, or a member of staff of the Ministry of Tourism or any delegation of The Bahamas who is on official duty overseas or the spouse of such person or any immediate member of the family living within the household of that member of staff; or
- (d) a member of staff of the Bahamas Maritime Authority or any other agency of the Government of The Bahamas, or the spouse of such person or any immediate member of the family living within the household of that member of staff,

and who is a registered voter may, subject to his enrolment as an overseas voter, vote at an embassy, high commission or other foreign mission of the Government of The Bahamas designated as a polling place by the Parliamentary Commissioner on such date appointed for the taking of the advanced poll.

A person described in section (1) above who wishes to vote overseas shall, at any time after registration and up to seven days after the issue of a Writ of Election, either-

- (e) submit his application for enrolment as an overseas voter in person at any embassy, high commission or foreign mission; or
- (f) apply in writing to the Parliamentary Commissioner for enrolment as an overseas voter.

Applications to vote may be done using a special form “J” which may be obtained from any Bahamas Embassy, High Commission, Consulate office, or from the Parliamentary Registration Department, Nassau, and submitted in person, by facsimile, or electronically, to reach the Parliamentary Commissioner within seven days of the issue of the writ.

A person who meets the criteria and is enrolled as an overseas voter will not be able to vote in The Bahamas on polling day.

It is anticipated that the service of registering and voting overseas will initially commence in the eastern United States and in the United Kingdom. Persons interested in utilizing the service should make contact with the nearest Bahamas Embassy/High Commission/Council Office so that the necessary arrangements may be made to accommodate them.

Parliamentary Commissioner