



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Representative John Gillette (R-30)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. John Gillette: Secretary Fontes' UOCAVA Ballot Directive Undermines Arizona Election Security

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona State Representative John Gillette today condemned Secretary of State Adrian Fontes for once again taking unilateral action that weakens Arizona's election integrity and threatens the lawful votes of citizens—especially those of men and women serving in uniform overseas—through a directive that removes county oversight from the voting process for deployed military personnel and overseas citizens.

On August 6, 2025, Secretary Fontes ordered counties to abandon the secure, state-managed Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) ballot processing system and instead use a third-party platform controlled solely by his office. The move strips counties of direct oversight, breaks established chain-of-custody procedures, and creates a back-door avenue for ballots from individuals who have never resided in Arizona to be inserted into the state's elections.

"UOCAVA exists to ensure that our deployed service members, their families, and Arizona residents living overseas can securely exercise their right to vote," said Representative Gillette, Chairman of the House Committee on Federalism, Military Affairs & Elections. **"It does not give voting rights to foreign nationals, illegal immigrants, or U.S. citizens with no prior Arizona residency. This directive is a reckless expansion of voting access beyond what the law allows."**

The change undermines the clear intent of federal law, circumvents the Arizona Election Procedures Manual—which requires a public process and legislative oversight before such changes—and risks improper use of federal funds designated for legitimate UOCAVA services. Removing counties from control also weakens ballot verification and tracking safeguards that protect against fraud.

Secretary Fontes' directive is part of a broader pattern by Democrats to erode voter eligibility safeguards. It is another in a series of attempts by state Democrats to weaken registration verification, centralize election authority in the Secretary of State's office, bypass county recorders, and eliminate database cross-checks with state agencies like MVD and AHCCCS. Republicans in the Legislature blocked those bills earlier this year, but Secretary Fontes is now attempting to impose the same policies by executive action.

"This is exactly the kind of partisan maneuver we fought to stop in the Legislature," Chairman Gillette said. **"The Secretary of State is attempting to change election law without the consent of the people's representatives, and in the process, he's jeopardizing the integrity of our elections."**

Chairman Gillette will be calling on the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to investigate the directive for potential violations of UOCAVA and the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, he is urging Congress and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to withhold federal UOCAVA funding until Arizona is in compliance, and demanding an immediate reversal of Secretary Fontes' August 6 order to restore county control over UOCAVA ballot processing.

“Our elections must protect lawful voters—especially our men and women serving overseas,” Chairman Gillette said. **“They deserve a voting system that is secure, transparent, and faithful to the law, not one manipulated for partisan gain.”**

John Gillette is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 30 in Mohave County. He is Chairman of the Federalism, Military Affairs & Elections Committee. Follow him on X at @AzRepGillette.

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