



# Wisconsin State Elections Board

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## Kennedy to Highlight Wisconsin's Non-Partisan Election Administration at National Conference on Wednesday

MADISON, WI – State Elections Board Executive Director Kevin Kennedy will focus attention on Wisconsin's non-partisan system for administering elections for a national audience this coming Wednesday.

The venue will be "Change the Way America Runs Its Elections," a conference organized by American University's Center for Democracy and Election Management, to take place from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., June 13, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Kennedy will explain how Wisconsin tries to keep partisan politics out of election administration.

"Wisconsin has had a non-partisan system for running elections since 1974," Kennedy said. "It's no surprise that we should be asked to explain how we do it to a wider audience at this juncture."

The conference will analyze problems with current systems of election administration in the United States and offer new proposals for creation of independent, nonpartisan election commissions. Wisconsin's experience can be a positive model, Kennedy said.

"Wisconsin's voter participation is second in the nation and it's one of only eight states with Election Day voter registration," Kennedy said. "We are unique in many ways."

The current State Election Board is made up of appointed citizens and has a non-partisan staff, Kennedy said. In September, the agency will be combined with the State Ethics Board to create the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, which will have six non-partisan members, he added.

"Even the municipal clerks who run Wisconsin's elections at the grassroots are non-partisan officeholders," Kennedy said. "We have a tradition of putting the process before any party or its members."

Wisconsin's election law and administration was also recently chosen as a research topic by Ohio State University's College of Law for an upcoming book. OSU professors visited the Elections Board in late May to examine the Badger State's election practices.

Kennedy, president of the National Association of State Election Directors (NASD) in 2006, also participated in the Global Electoral Organization conference in March in Washington.

Other conference participants Wednesday will include California Congresswoman Susan Davis, who recently introduced a bill prohibiting election officials from participating in campaigns; two members of the Carter-Baker Commission on Federal Election Reform, Susan Molinari, former Member of Congress, and Sharon Priest, former Secretary of State of Arkansas; Jean-Pierre Kingsley, President of IFES and former head of Elections Canada; Jamin Raskin, Maryland State Senator, and Mary Margaret Oliver, Georgia General Assembly member.

American University's Center for Democracy and Election Management provided academic support for the work of the Carter-Baker Commission on Federal Election Reform. One of the Commission's key recommendations was the institution of non-partisan election administration throughout the United States.

Get more information about the work of the Elections Board by telephone at **1-866-VOTEWIS** (868-3947), by electronic mail at **seb@seb.state.wi.us**, or through the Internet at <http://elections.wi.gov>.

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