

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

17 W. Main St., Suite 310 ▪ Madison, WI 53703 ▪ gab@wi.gov ▪ (608) 266-8005 ▪ Help Desk (608) 261-2028 ▪ <http://gab.wi.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 3, 2008

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Kyle R. Richmond, 608-267-7887

Significant Increase Seen in 2008 Absentee Vote

MADISON, WI – A preliminary review of absentee voting trends in select municipalities indicates the State's 2008 absentee votes could increase by as much as 50% over 2004. That is what Kevin J. Kennedy, Wisconsin's Chief Election Officer and Director and General Counsel of the Government Accountability Board, predicted today.

"Based on feedback from our local election partners regarding significant in-person absentee voting, as well as our review of media coverage and our monitoring activity in our Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS), if the public perceives a high interest in tomorrow's election, the analysis of absentee voting in our four largest counties and two most populous municipalities confirms these perceptions," Kennedy said.

According to Kennedy, the total 2004 absentee vote statewide was 364,639. However, as of today, an examination of absentee voter data for select municipalities in Brown, Dane, Milwaukee and Waukesha counties shows at least an overall 50% increase over 2004. "Milwaukee County alone already has an 84% jump over 2004," Kennedy added.

"When we look at the 2004 and 2008 absentee voter data for the City Madison and the City of Milwaukee, Madison's numbers have increased by 34% and Milwaukee's by 130% respectively over 2004," continued Kennedy.

350,649 absentee ballots had been issued as of Friday, October 31. The data from Madison and Milwaukee were current as of Monday evening. However, this sampling does not include absentee voter information from six of the State's 20 largest municipalities, including Green Bay, Kenosha, Sheboygan, Franklin, Fond du Lac, and Greenfield.

Kennedy cautioned that the data used for this preliminary analysis are incomplete and therefore, should be used with care until all the information is in from around the State. "However, if this trend continues, and we believe it will," said Kennedy, "we feel certain that 2008 absentee ballots issued in 2008 will increase by at least 50% over 2004."

###

The Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The G.A.B. is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members. Additional information about the mission of the G.A.B. may be obtained by telephone at **1-608-266-8005**, by electronic mail at **gab@wi.gov**, or through the Internet at **<http://gab.wi.gov>**.