Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Accountability Board to Seek Public Input on Possible Early Voting for Wisconsin

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) will solicit input from local election officials and the general public this summer regarding possible institution of an early voting process for 2010 elections.

"The Board wants to ensure that elections and voting are also convenient, as well as secure and transparent," said G.A.B. Director Kevin Kennedy. "This initiative will give Wisconsinites a chance to help decide how they can vote in future elections."

The Board in late March adopted a staff report which included several options for administering early voting in Wisconsin. The Board also asked staff to seek comment and suggested changes from the public, clerks and state legislators.

The report, *An Examination of Early Voting in Wisconsi*n, is posted in the "What's New" section of the Elections Division homepage at *http://gab.wi.gov*. It presents three options for changing the current system of pre-Election Day (absentee) voting in Wisconsin: 1) simply streamlining the absentee voting process; 2) allowing individual municipalities to opt into an early voting system; or 3) conducting early voting through a system of regional districts throughout the state.

"Our research presents potential benefits and drawbacks to a change in the current system," said Nat Robinson, Elections Division Administrator. "We're very interested in the public's feedback to see what voters think may be most important in this proposal."

An early voting pilot has been recommended for spring 2010.

G.A.B. staff will hold a series of listening sessions around Wisconsin beginning in July to gauge reaction from voters and clerks to early voting. The schedule is as follows:

- July 7: Fitchburg Community Center, Oak Hall Room, Fitchburg (Dane County). Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM
- July 16: La Crosse Central Library, Main Auditorium, La Crosse (La Crosse

County). Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM

- July 22: Kenosha County Center, Hearing Room, Kenosha (Kenosha County). Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM
- July 23: West Allis City Hall, Common Council Meeting Room, West Allis (Milwaukee County) Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM
- August 3: Northcentral Technical College, Center for Health Science Auditorium, Wausau (Marathon County). Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM
- August 4: Brown County Central Library, Auditorium, Green Bay (Brown County). Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM
- August 11: Town of Washington Town Hall, Board Room, Washington (Eau Claire County). Clerks meeting: 3 PM to 5 PM; Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM
- August 12: Rice Lake City Hall, Lakeshore & Council Rooms, Rice Lake (Barron County). Combined Clerk & Public Meeting: 6 PM to 8 PM

The input from the public and local election officials will be summarized and presented to G.A.B. members and state legislators who may consider early voting during the legislative session. Comments from the public may be submitted directly to the Board at the following address: *gab@wi.gov*.

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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**.