

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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DATE: March 18, 2016

TO: Wisconsin County Clerks & Milwaukee County Election Commission
Wisconsin Municipal Clerks & City of Milwaukee Election Commission

FROM: Michael Haas, Elections Division Administrator
David Buerger, Elections Specialist

SUBJECT: Photo ID Lessons Learned from the Spring Primary

As in-person absentee voting begins next week and polling places will see a larger turnout at the Spring Election, we thought it would be helpful to share some lessons learned from the February Primary regarding the proof of identification requirement. It is understandable that there is a learning curve regarding the details of the Photo ID Law. However, we are striving for a more consistent implementation of the requirements and a reduction in the confusion and the number of polling place errors, as compared to the reports we received during the Spring Primary. To that end, we ask that you pass along the following reminders to your election inspectors as well as staff that will be handling in-person absentee voting.

- Proof of residence is different than proof of identification. Proof of residence proves where you live to register to vote. Proof of identification proves who you are in order to receive a ballot. The address on an acceptable Photo ID is irrelevant, does not need to be current, and is not information that inspectors should review or verify.
- While the proof of identification photo guide illustrates all of the categories of acceptable Photo ID, it is not and cannot be “all inclusive” in terms of the variations within those categories. It is possible for an ID to be acceptable proof of identification and not be pictured on the photo guide.
- If a voter does not have acceptable proof of identification during in-person absentee, the voter does NOT get a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots are only issued on Election Day.
- There are military IDs that are acceptable proof of identification that do not have an expiration date. Retired military IDs are a good example of military IDs that may not have an expiration date, but are still valid for voting purposes. Retired military IDs may read “Expires: Indefinite.” Also, remember that Veterans Administration photo ID cards are now acceptable.
- Out of state driver licenses or identification cards are NOT acceptable proof of identification.
- Election officials can ask a voter to remove their ID from their wallet if they cannot see the relevant information (name, photo, expiration date). Also, presenting a photo ID does not substitute for the voter stating aloud his or her name and address, which is still required.
- A voter without an acceptable form of Photo ID at the polling place must be offered a provisional ballot. There should not be instances of voters being “turned away” at the polling place without an opportunity to vote because of a lack of an acceptable Photo ID.

Thank you for your attention to these reminders. For more complete information regarding the Photo ID Law, you may view the January 5, 2016 webinar at <http://www.gab.wi.gov/publications/video/2016-photo-ID-law-implementation>. If you have further questions regarding the proof of identification requirement, please contact the Help Desk via phone at (608) 261-2028 or via email at gabhelpdesk@wi.gov