

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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JUDGE GERALD C. NICHOL
Chairperson

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 20, 2015

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

FROM: Kevin Kennedy
Director and General Counsel

Michael Haas
Elections Division Administrator

SUBJECT: Legislative Audit Committee Hearing

Two weeks ago the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) notified local election officials that a public hearing would be held regarding the audit report of the agency completed by the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB), and requested that interested parties submit feedback and testimony regarding the audit and the G.A.B.'s performance to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The Committee held its hearing last week and received a great deal of written and in-person testimony from the perspective of municipal and county clerks regarding the role of the G.A.B. and your interactions with our staff.

We wish to thank all of the local election officials who took the time to draft correspondence and testimony, and those who made the trip to Madison and patiently waited their turn to provide comments to the Committee. We believe it was important for the Committee to hear your feedback about the expertise and services provided by the G.A.B. staff and Board, regardless of whether that feedback was positive or negative. The fact that the testimony was overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the G.A.B.'s efforts over the past several years was definitely gratifying.

Local clerks can certainly relate to the challenge of juggling priorities and squeezing in a seemingly endless list of responsibilities into a limited number of staff hours, and that is what the audit report reflected in its overview of the G.A.B.'s performance. The audit report listed several areas in which the G.A.B. can improve and catch up on tasks that needed to be put on the back burner. As many local election officials demonstrated at the hearing, the report did not emphasize the many positive and highly successful achievements of the G.A.B. That, as you know, is the nature of audits.

We appreciate each of you who shared your thoughts with the Audit Committee. We also appreciate the efforts of the county and municipal clerks associations in spreading the word about the hearing and the importance of providing feedback to the Legislature. We look forward to continuing to work in a strong partnership with Wisconsin's local election officials to implement recommendations of the audit.

We will update you regarding any legislative initiatives resulting from the audit report or regarding the role and structure of the G.A.B. If you have any questions regarding the LAB audit report or the public hearing, please contact Michael Haas at michael.haas@wi.gov, (608) 266-0136 or Kevin Kennedy at kevin.kennedy@wi.gov, 608-261-8683.

Thank you.