

# State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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JUDGE THOMAS H. BARLAND  
Chairperson

KEVIN J. KENNEDY  
Director and General Counsel

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 8, 2015

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

**FROM:** Michael Haas  
Elections Division Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Audit of Government Accountability Board

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee will conduct a public hearing regarding the Legislative Audit Bureau's (LAB) audit of the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.), which was issued last month. The public hearing will be held next **Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 411 South of the State Capitol**. This is an important opportunity for the public, and especially for the constituencies which the agency serves, such as local election officials, to provide feedback directly to the Legislature regarding the performance of the G.A.B.

The LAB's audit report was the result of a year-long comprehensive review of the G.A.B. and its programs, management, and staffing since 2010. The audit cited a relatively small number of areas in which the G.A.B. could improve its operations and provided recommendations for future action by agency staff as well as several ideas for legislative consideration. The audit report is attached and can be found at this link: <http://gab.wi.gov/node/3498>

The State Auditor described the report as an "exceptions report" in which the focus was on potential areas of improvement rather than the many tasks and responsibilities which the G.A.B. successfully manages and completes. For example, the only feedback regarding G.A.B. training mentioned in the report is that the auditors spoke with 20 local clerks who expressed satisfaction with the training, particularly with the webinars and manuals.

As you may know, some legislators have recently called for changes to the structure of the G.A.B., and cited the audit report to support that suggestion. We believe that the structure and the performance of the G.A.B. has been a significant success during very busy and politically-charged times. Regardless of whether your evaluation of the G.A.B. is positive or negative, it is important that the elected officials considering the audit report and who will determine whether or not the agency continues in its present form hear from those who interact with the G.A.B. on a regular basis.

**We encourage local election officials to attend the hearing and to present testimony, in person and/or in writing.** A copy of the public hearing notice is attached. Written testimony may be submitted to the Audit Committee Co-Chairs at

The Honorable Robert Cowles  
State Senator  
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[Sen.Cowles@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Sen.Cowles@legis.wi.gov)

The Honorable Samantha Kerkman  
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If you have any questions regarding the LAB audit or the public hearing, please contact me at [michael.haas@wi.gov](mailto:michael.haas@wi.gov) or (608) 266-0136. Thank you.