

# State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

212 East Washington Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Post Office Box 7984  
Madison, WI 53707-7984  
Voice (608) 261-2028  
Fax (608) 267-0500  
E-mail: [gab@wisconsin.gov](mailto:gab@wisconsin.gov)  
<http://gab.wi.gov>



JUDGE VICTOR MANIAN  
Chair

KEVIN J. KENNEDY  
Director and General Counsel

## MEMORANDUM

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

**FROM:** Michael Haas  
Elections Division Administrator

**DATE:** February 2, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Senate Bill 295 Substitute Amendment  
**Legislative Committee to Consider Online Registration, Absentee Ballot Tracking and Other Election Changes Tomorrow, February 3, 2016**

This afternoon a revised version of legislation to make several significant election law changes was introduced, which will be considered and voted on at an executive session of the Senate Committee on Elections and Local Government tomorrow, February 3, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. The proposed changes include the implementation of online voter registration, interstate matching of voter records, and requiring clerks to promptly track additional information regarding all absentee ballots in WisVote, in addition to several other statutory revisions.

Last year the elections committees in the Senate and Assembly held a joint public hearing on Senate Bill 295. Senate Substitute Amendment 1 to that bill can be viewed at this link: [http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/related/amendments/sb295/ssa1\\_sb295](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/related/amendments/sb295/ssa1_sb295)

Because a public hearing has already been held on the original bill, the Committee will not hold another public hearing and will meet in executive session tomorrow to vote on whether to recommend the bill for action by the full Senate. The notice of the Committee meeting can be found at this link: <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1223845>

G.A.B. staff is still reviewing details of the Amendment, but wanted to advise local election officials of the Committee meeting. Highlights of the Substitute Amendment include:

1. The implementation of online voter registration by the G.A.B. and the future Elections Commission no later than the 2017 Spring Primary, but earlier if the system can be developed in time for elections in the fall of 2016. Electors could register online during the open registration period if they possess a current and valid Wisconsin driver's license or identification card, and if the name used for voter registration matches the name in the Department of Motor Vehicles database.

2. The elimination of special registration deputies, effective upon the implementation of online voter registration. The bill would authorize municipal clerks to appoint “election registration officials” who could conduct voter registration at residential care facilities, during in-person absentee voting and at polling places.
3. The elimination of the statute related to transferring registration, requiring a new voter registration application for any elector wishing to change their name or address on their voter registration.
4. Directing that the State join the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a consortium of states which compare voter registration data in order to improve the accuracy of their voter registration systems and to identify individuals who may be eligible to vote but are not currently registered.
5. Removes the prohibition on the use of an examination for chief inspectors.
6. Permits the G.A.B. to approve electronic voting equipment which has not been certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.
7. Permits election inspectors to use the override function of voting equipment when processing an overvoted ballot rather than remaking the ballot.
8. Permits an occupant of a residential care facility to use a contract or intake document prepared by the facility as proof of residence for the purpose of voter registration.
9. Permits the use of a veterans ID card issued by the Veterans Health Administration to be used as an acceptable form of photo identification for obtaining a ballot.
10. Requires all absentee ballots to be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day, removing the option for the ballot to be received by the Friday after the election if it is postmarked by Election Day.
11. Prohibits an absentee ballot from being counted if the certificate envelope is missing the address of a witness.
12. Requires that the municipal clerk, whenever mailing an absentee ballot or receiving an in-person absentee ballot application or a completed absentee ballot, indicate the status of the absentee ballot within 48 hours in WisVote, or provide the updated information to their WisVote provider who must then enter the data into WisVote within 24 hours.
13. Requires the G.A.B. and the future Elections Commission to establish a subscription service to allow access to the absentee ballot data provided by clerks in WisVote on at least a semiweekly basis.
14. Requires county clerks to post all election night returns on a county website within two hours of receiving the returns, and that the G.A.B. provide a link to those returns on its website.

If you have questions with respect to this memorandum, please contact the G.A.B. Help Desk at 608-261-2028 or [gabhhelpdesk@wi.gov](mailto:gabhhelpdesk@wi.gov).