

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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DATE: December 12, 2012

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

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson
Elections Division Administrator
Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: G.A.B. Preliminary Report on the Impacts and Costs of Eliminating EDR

The Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) recently initiated a study regarding the impacts and costs of eliminating Election Day Registration (EDR) in Wisconsin. The G.A.B. also received a request from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau to analyze how much it would cost the State if EDR were to be eliminated. If this change is made to Wisconsin law, the State would immediately lose its exemption to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) and certain provisions of the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

Under the NVRA, also known as the Motor Voter Act, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and other State agencies that provide federal or state public assistance or administer programs that assist persons with disabilities would be required to offer voter registration opportunities in addition to their regular products and services.

This Report analyzes the anticipated impacts on Wisconsin election administration and the procedures of several State agencies, if Wisconsin Statutes were amended to eliminate the opportunity for EDR. Specifically, it seeks to identify areas of election administration such as the issuance of provisional ballots, voter registration procedures and voter list maintenance practices that would require significant changes to current procedures. The report and general information about EDR is available on the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/election-day-registration>.

As a reference, this Report also provides preliminary estimated costs related to additional responsibilities of the Government Accountability Board which would result from the elimination of EDR. This estimate does not include the costs that would be incurred by partner agencies, such as the DMV, Department of Health Services, Department of Children and Families, and Department of Workforce Development, which would be designated under NVRA to provide voter registration services to all of their customers. It also does not address any possible additional costs that would be incurred by local election officials.

Timeline and Request: The final report will be issued to the Wisconsin State Legislature in late December and will contain more specific cost information, as well as cost information from the partner State agencies and feedback from municipal and county election officials about how these proposed changes would impact their ability to administer elections. Although we are reaching out to the leadership of both the County and the Municipal Clerks' Associations for feedback on how NVRA would impact elections at the local level, we welcome hearing from all clerks. Please read the report and provide us with any feedback that you feel is appropriate at GabHelpdesk@wi.gov.