

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2016

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

FROM: Michael Haas
Elections Division Administrator

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Voter Outreach Specialist

SUBJECT: Issuing Official Ballots to Military Voters for the April 5 Election

This communication is a follow-up to the clerk communication posted to the G.A.B. website on February 12, 2016 titled, [*Spring Election and Presidential Preference Ballots*](#). That communication focused on the transmission of Presidential Preference-Only (PPO) ballots to military and permanent overseas voters for the April 5 election and indicated that municipal clerks would need to send a second, official ballot to military voters once local and state contests had been certified.

This communication is intended to cover the processes to issue the April 5 official ballot to military voters who have already received a PPO ballot.

Issuing Official April 5 Ballots to Military Voters

The April 5 Presidential Preference contest is considered a federal election and is therefore subject to federal and state deadlines for issuing ballots to military and overseas voters. Municipalities were required to issue PPO ballots to military and permanent overseas voters starting on the state deadline of February 18, 2016. At the time of the deadline, state and local contests for the April 5 election had not yet been certified. In the last week, the state and local contests for the April 5 election have been certified and official ballots that contain both the Presidential Preference contests as well as state and local contests are now available. Municipalities are now issuing official absentee ballots to voters.

Military voters who have already received a PPO ballot by email, mail, or fax, should now be issued an official ballot for the April 5 election. This will give the voter the opportunity to participate in the state and local contests. Municipal clerks should label the certificate envelope sent to military voters with the official ballot so that it can be distinguished from a certificate envelope containing the PPO ballot.

Military voters who request an absentee ballot for the April 5 election after the official ballots are available must be sent an official ballot.

Permanent overseas voters who request an absentee ballot for the April 5 election should only receive PPO ballots. Permanent overseas voters are only eligible to participate in federal contests. Do not send a full official ballot to permanent overseas voters.

WisVote - How to Issue April 5 Official Ballot to Military Voters

The process for issuing the second, official ballot in WisVote to military voters is very similar to how the PPO ballot was issued. Instructions on how to issue the second ballot are attached to this communication as *Attachment A*. *Attachment A* includes the following instructions:

Instructions for WisVote Self-Providers

- How to issue a second, official ballot to military voters who have already been sent a PPO ballot.
- How to issue official ballots to military voters as part of a batch.

Instructions for WisVote Providers

- *How to record the issuance of the official ballot to a military voter without printing labels.*

Note to WisVote Reliers

Reliers who have sent a PPO ballot to a military voter and are now sending the voter an official ballot, will issue the ballot, mark the issuance on their absentee ballot log, and then send the absentee ballot log records to their WisVote provider.

How to Count Returned Ballots

Military voters who have received both a PPO ballot and an official ballot for the April 5 election may return both ballots. Only one can be counted. Please follow these procedures for counting April 5 ballots for military voters:

- If both a PPO ballot and an official ballot were issued to a military voter but *only the PPO ballot is returned on or before April 5*, do not send the PPO ballot to the polls to be counted. Instead, please do the following:
 - Wait until 4:00 pm on the Friday after the election to see if the official ballot is returned. If the official ballot is returned by the deadline, instruct the MBOC to reject the PPO ballot and count the official ballot as a late arriving absentee ballot.
 - If the official ballot is not received by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday after the election, then the MBOC will count the PPO ballot as a late arriving absentee ballot.
- If both a PPO ballot and an official ballot were issued to a military voter and *only the official ballot is returned on or before April 5*, send the official ballot to the polls to be counted. If the PPO ballot is then received after Election Day, the MBOC will reject the PPO ballot as the voter's official ballot has already been counted.
- If both a PPO ballot and an official ballot were issued to a military voter and *both the PPO ballot and the official ballot are returned on or before April 5*, send both the official ballot and the PPO ballot to the polls. Instruct your inspectors to count the official ballot and reject the PPO ballot.

We have been advised that some ballots for the April 5 election issued by mail or electronically to both military and permanent overseas voters did not include the reverse side of the ballot. The reverse side contains the ballot endorsement. The absence of the reverse side of the ballot means that a ballot returned by the voter will not contain the clerk's initials and there will be no reference to the municipality and reporting unit in which the elector is voting. If a ballot is received from a military or permanent overseas voter for the April 5 election that does not contain the endorsement section or the clerk's initials, the ballot should still be counted. Please refer to *Attachment B* for complete instructions on how to process such ballots.

The April 5 Election and MyVote.wi.gov

Presidential preference only ballots have been available to Military and Permanent Overseas voters on the MyVote.wi.gov website since February 18, 2016. MyVote Wisconsin notifies online voters that they will initially have access to a Presidential Preference-Only ballot and that an official ballot will be available once state and local contests are certified.

Official ballots become available to military voters on MyVote once the municipality, county, and state have all completed their "contests" and "candidates" checkpoints in WisVote. Therefore, it is very important to complete these checkpoints only after contests and candidates are finalized in WisVote. If the checkpoints are completed, but the information entered into WisVote is incomplete, voters will not have access to a complete ballot. For more information on completing contests and candidates, please see the document titled [April 5 Pre-Election WisVote Checklist for the 2016 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Vote](#). This is the same process that generates sample ballots on MyVote. An incomplete sample ballot will display on MyVote until the municipality, county, and state have all completed the contest and candidate checkpoints. WisVote reliers should work with their provider to ensure contests and candidates are complete.

In addition, please be sure that election plans for your municipality are complete in WisVote. More information on completing election plans can also be found in the document titled [April 5 Pre-Election WisVote Checklist for the 2016 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Vote](#). If election plans are not complete in WisVote, voters will be unable to view their polling place location on MyVote. WisVote reliers should work with their provider to be sure election plans are up-to-date.

Remember: The G.A.B. is required to report results for the Presidential Preference Vote by congressional district. Therefore, reporting units for the April 5 election may not cross congressional districts.

Additionally, if the contact information for your municipality has changed, please provide up-to-date contact information to the G.A.B. by completing the GAB-362. Municipal clerk contact information, including office address, mailing address, email, phone number, and fax number are all provided to voters on MyVote. Having the correct information ensures that military and permanent overseas voters know where to return their ballots. It also ensures that all voters can contact their clerk with questions or mail their voter registrations and absentee ballot requests. Please contact the G.A.B at (608) 261-2028 or at GAB@wi.gov with any contact information updates.