

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor ▪ Madison, WI 53703 ▪ gab@wi.gov ▪ (608) 266-8005 ▪ Help Desk (608) 261-2028 ▪ <http://gab.wi.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 2, 2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Reid Magney, 608-267-7887

Media Advisory: Covering Election Day 2012

Madison, WI – Anticipating a high level of state and national media interest in covering Wisconsin’s voting on November 6, 2012, the Government Accountability Board is issuing this advisory. This is for planning purposes only, and not intended for publication or distribution.

At the Polling Place

Members of the news media may be inside polling places on Election Day, subject to most of the same restrictions on other election observers. Please refer to our election observer brochure (<http://gab.wi.gov/publications/brochures/observer-rules>) for details. Reporters and photographers may wish to print the brochure to take with them in the event there are questions.

Unlike voters and regular election observers, media may record sound, images and video inside the polling place, as long as it is not disruptive. You may use cell phones or tablets to take pictures and video, something regular observers are not allowed to do. However, no media may broadcast live or tape broadcasts (stand-ups) from within a polling place.

When you arrive at a polling place, find the Chief Election Inspector and notify him or her who you are and what organization you represent. The Chief Inspector keeps a list of media, but you are not required to sign in.

You may not contact (interview) voters when they are in line waiting to vote. The only people authorized to have contact with voters prior to voting are the election workers. Please do not take images/video of voters’ faces going into polling places, which some voters find intimidating. Photographing lines of voters should not be a problem. After voters have finished, you are free to ask them for interviews outside the polling place. Please do not block the exits.

The best sources of information about polling places are municipal clerks. A directory of clerks is on our website: <http://gab.wi.gov/clerks/directory>.

Election Day Issues

For updates on how voting is going on Election Day, visit our website: <http://gab.wi.gov/blog>. You can also follow our Twitter feed: http://twitter.com/Wisconsin_GAB. When we know something, we’ll post it.

Counting the Vote

Wisconsin does not have a statewide system for reporting results on Election Night, and there is not a central website where results will be reported. The most reliable source is the Associated Press, which gathers information from all 72 counties and provides unofficial results to its members. Some television stations in Wisconsin that are not AP members are also collecting election results.

After the polls close at 8 p.m., the election workers will count any absentee ballots that have not been counted throughout the day and announce the vote totals for that polling place. They will also take care of the administrative work required before taking the results to the municipal clerk. The municipal clerk then provides the unofficial results to the county clerk, who tabulates results for the county and posts it to the county's website.

Absentee ballots that have been postmarked by Election Day have until 4 p.m. on Friday, November 9 to arrive in the clerk's office to be counted. Municipalities are required to post the number of outstanding absentee ballots and provisional ballots on the internet on Election Night. (Unlike other states, Wisconsin has very few provisional ballots because we have Election Day Registration.)

Counties will convene their boards of canvass to certify official results starting on Tuesday, November 13. While we expect official results to come in relatively quickly, the deadline for counties to provide certified results to the Government Accountability Board is Tuesday, November 20. The deadline for the G.A.B. to certify statewide results is December 1.

Recount Rules

If the election is close and a losing candidate wants to ask for a recount, the candidate must wait until the last day a county board of canvassers meets, and the deadline for requesting a recount is three business days after the G.A.B. receives the last statement from a county board of canvassers. For more information about recounts, please see consult the information here: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/recount>.

Election Day Interviews

News media wishing to set up interviews with G.A.B. Director Kevin Kennedy should contact Reid Magney at 608-267-7887, or email reid.magney@wi.gov.

###

The Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The G.A.B. is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members.