

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:
April 3, 2015

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

Turnout Estimated at 20 percent for April 7 Election

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board is predicting voter turnout of 20 percent for the Spring Election on Tuesday, April 7.

A photo ID is not required on April 7 for voters to receive their ballots, but one will be required for future elections, including special elections in 2015.

Wisconsin's voters will choose among 10,689 candidates for 7,628 state and local offices, as well as vote on one state constitutional amendment and 113 different local referenda.

“While there is much focus on the statewide elections for Supreme Court Justice and the constitutional amendment, Spring Elections are the people’s chance to have their say about local government and schools,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “These local officials and referenda can have an immediate and significant effect on people’s taxes and quality of life.”

The constitutional amendment asks voters whether the chief justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court should be elected for a two-year term by a majority of the justices. Currently, the most senior justice serves as chief justice. More information about the referendum is available on the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/2015/spring-chief-justice-referendum>.

Local races on the ballot include elections for two court of appeals judges, 62 circuit court judges and thousands of city, village, town and school district officials. There is also a special election to fill a vacant seat in State Senate District 20 in all or parts of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Ozaukee, Sheboygan and Washington counties.

There are 61 school district referenda on the ballot. Other local referenda range from advisory questions about whether all-terrain vehicles should be allowed to use town roads to incorporating as a village.

On March 23, the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way for Wisconsin’s voter ID law. The Attorney General’s office has advised that photo ID cannot be implemented in time for the April 7 election, but that it will be in effect for future elections, including special elections in May. The next regular election when photo ID will be required is February 16, 2016.

To find out which candidates and referendums they will see on the ballot, voters should visit the MyVote Wisconsin website: <http://myvote.wi.gov>. Registered voters can put in their name and date of birth to see what is on their ballot. Voters planning to register at the polls on Election Day can use the Address Search feature to find their polling place and see sample ballots for their city, village or town.

Elections Division Administrator Michael Haas reminded voters who plan to register on Election Day to bring an acceptable proof of residence document with them. “You can use a current and valid Wisconsin driver license or identification card that has your current address,” Haas said. “But there are many other kinds of documents that work as well, including property tax bills, utility bills, bank statements and paychecks.” A full list of acceptable documents is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/voter-guides/proof-of-residence>.

In-person absentee voting – also known as early voting – in the clerk’s office ends 5 p.m. or the close of business today, April 3. Absentee ballots cast by mail must be postmarked by Election Day and received in the clerk’s office by Friday, April 10 to be counted.

Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. on Election Day. Haas reminded voters and clerks that the G.A.B. will be open for extended hours for the election. On Friday, April 3 and Monday, April 6, the agency will be open until 6 p.m., and on Election Day from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Voters can call 1-866-VOTE-WIS (866-868-3947) or 608-261-2028.

Commenting on the turnout projection, Kennedy said: “The last Spring Election with contested statewide races was in 2013, and turnout was 20.4 percent of eligible voters. We expect this year’s turnout to be close to that.”

In comparison, the April 2011 Spring Election at the height of the Capitol protests had turnout of 34.3 percent. Turnout for the previous three contested Supreme Court elections – 2007, 2008 and 2009 – ranged from 18.2 percent to 19.3 percent. Turnout in Spring Elections is relatively small compared to November elections. Turnout at the November 2012 Presidential Election was 70.1 percent and at the November 2014 General Election was 54.8 percent.

Wisconsin has an estimated voting-age population of 4,416,501 adults. Voter turnout and current voter registration statistics are available at: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Spreadsheets containing the names of all state and local candidates and all the local referenda are available on the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/2015/spring>.

###

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.