

# Government Accountability Board

## State of Wisconsin

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## **What Voters Need to Know About Absentee Ballot Application Solicitations**

MADISON, WI – Absentee ballot applications paid for by the Republican Party, which many Wisconsin voters have been receiving in the mail are permissible, according to the Government Accountability Board.

The G.A.B. and municipal clerks around the state have been receiving numerous complaints about the mailers because they also contain campaign messages, said Kevin J. Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B.

The return mailer comes with the address of the voter's local municipal clerk, to whom the request must be sent. This has led many people to wrongly assume that the clerk is responsible for the mailer, Kennedy said.

Many different political parties and interest groups have used this kind of mailer in the past in their get-out-the-vote efforts, Kennedy said. In addition to possibly implying that the municipality produced it, the problem with these kinds of mailers is that some have incorrect addresses for the clerk's office, meaning the request is misdirected or delayed.

So far, the G.A.B. is not aware of any address problems with the most recent Republican Party mailer, but Kennedy cautioned voters to double check their municipal clerk's address to make sure it is correct if they use the application to request an absentee ballot. Voters who object to the political message should contact the Republican Party of Wisconsin. A directory of clerks is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/clerks/directory>.

Most voters who wish to cast absentee ballots by mail must submit their written request by 5 p.m. the Thursday before the election. Voters who are military and overseas, or who are indefinitely confined due to age, disability, infirmity or illness may request absentee ballots by 5 p.m. Friday. Absentee ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, and received by 4 p.m. Friday, May 11 in order to be counted.

Those wishing to vote early may also do so in-person at their municipal clerk's office during normal business hours. The period for in-person absentee voting ends Friday, May 4 at 5 p.m. or the close of business, whichever is later.

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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.