

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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G.A.B.: 2014 Fall Election Season Kicks Off Today

MADISON, WI – Many candidates planning to run in the November 4, 2014 election have been organizing their campaigns and raising money for months. But today is the first day for candidates and supporters to circulate their nomination papers to get on the ballot, marking the official start of the Fall 2014 campaign season.

With such a large number of legislative incumbents deciding not to seek re-election, there will likely be many more newcomers entering the campaign, said Kevin J. Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “Our agency is a one-stop shop to help candidates understand how to get on the ballot and comply with election and campaign finance rules.”

Several major offices are up for election this year including Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Representative in Congress, State Senator (odd-numbered districts), and Representatives to the Assembly (all districts). The county partisan offices of Sheriff, Coroner and Clerk of Circuit Courts will also be on the ballot, bringing the total number of offices up for election to 344.

The first step for candidates – if they have not already done so – is to register their committees with the G.A.B or the County Clerk. “State Candidates must register with the G.A.B. as soon as they form the intent to run for office,” said Jonathan Becker, the Ethics & Accountability Division administrator. “Our web-based Campaign Finance Information System (<http://cfis.wi.gov>) allows candidates to register and report online, reducing paperwork and ensuring quick public access to the information.”

Nomination papers and declaration of candidacy forms are all available on the G.A.B.’s website, <http://gab.wi.gov>. “Candidates can download all the necessary forms from our web site,” said Michael Haas, Elections Division administrator. “If candidates have questions, they should call our Help Desk at (608) 261-2028 to speak with an elections specialist.”

A handy checklist for candidates listing documents that must be filed and deadlines is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/forms/gabis-9>.

Haas noted that state law regarding nominating petition signatures changed this year. 2013 Wisconsin Act 160 requires all nomination papers to contain a space for the signer to legibly print his or her name. In order for a signature to be considered valid, the signer must legibly print his or her name, in addition to the other requirements of Wisconsin law. More information about the new law is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/node/3164>.

The deadline for candidates to file their nomination papers and declarations of candidacy is June 1, but because that is a Sunday this year, the deadline is extended to 5 p.m. Monday, June 2. Candidates for county office file their paperwork with the County Clerk and candidates for state and federal office file with the Government Accountability Board. By 4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 5, all candidates for state office also must file a Statement of Economic Interests with the Government Accountability Board.

When the Board receives nominating petitions and other necessary paperwork for candidates to get on the ballot, they will be reviewed by staff to ensure everything is in order, and there are enough valid signatures. Candidates for statewide office need a minimum of 2,000 signatures, State Senate candidates need a minimum of 400 signatures and State Assembly candidates need a minimum of 200 signatures. Congressional candidates need a minimum of 1,000 signatures.

Nomination petitions and related paperwork is also often scrutinized by the political parties and other candidates who may file challenges if they believe petitions do not contain enough valid signatures. The deadline for the Board to receive challenges is 4:30 p.m. Thursday June 5.

The Board will meet on June 10 to consider any challenges and determine which candidates will be on the ballot for the August 12, 2014 Partisan Primary.

Already, five members of the Senate and 20 members of the Assembly have announced they will not be seeking re-election this year. That compares with three members of the Senate and 19 members of the Assembly in 2010. Comparisons to 2012 are difficult because of the large number of officials who filed non-candidacy declarations due to redistricting.

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The Government Accountability Board is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The board is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members. Additional information about the mission of the Government Accountability Board is available by telephone at **608-266-8005**, by electronic mail at **gab@wi.gov**, or through the Internet at **<http://gab.wi.gov>**.