

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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G.A.B. Statement Regarding New Waukesha County Election Night Reporting Procedures

MADISON, WI – Kevin J. Kennedy, director and general counsel of the Government Accountability Board, issued the following statement today in response to inquiries regarding changes to the procedures for reporting Election Night results in Waukesha County:

The G.A.B. has been working with Waukesha County officials for some time now to help them improve their Election Night reporting processes. Following media reports of delays in posting Election Night results for the April 3 Spring Election, our staff reached out to the Waukesha County Clerk's Office to offer further technical assistance.

In the meantime, Waukesha County Executive Dan Vrakas and Waukesha County Clerk Kathy Nickolaus reached an agreement for her to delegate her Election Night duties to her deputy clerk. My staff has since met with Waukesha County officials to help them develop a workable solution for timely, accurate and efficient Election Night reporting.

Waukesha County is asking municipal clerks to report their unofficial results on Election Night using Wisconsin's Canvass Reporting System (CRS). G.A.B. built CRS using federal grant monies, and launched it in September 2010 to allow county clerks to report official canvass results to the state electronically, several days after the election. When we designed this web-based system, we also built in a tool for municipal clerks to enter unofficial, Election Night results into the system. This is something that is not currently required by law, but which the state may want to consider in the future. It is that Election Night reporting tool that municipalities in Waukesha County are being asked to use.

On Election Night, municipal clerks in Waukesha County will enter their unofficial results into the system for all offices on the ballot. When they are done, they will print a report, sign it and electronically transmit it to the Waukesha County Clerk's Office, eliminating the need to travel to the Courthouse on Election Night with their results. This should save a significant amount of time in releasing the unofficial Election Night vote totals. Municipal clerks will still physically transport the official results to the Courthouse after the election, as required by law, by 4 p.m. the day after the election.

The Waukesha County Clerk's Office will be able to create detailed reports from the data entered by municipal clerks, and publish those unofficial results reports in a variety of formats to the county's website for the public and news media to view and download. The G.A.B. staff is working with Waukesha County's information technology staff to ensure a smooth transition to the approach to Election Night reporting.

All County Clerks are required to post unofficial election results on Election Night. They use a variety of methods to collect this information so the public has information on Election Night. Several Wisconsin county clerks have used the Canvass Reporting System successfully to tabulate and publish unofficial Election Night results.

As part of the official election canvassing process, the Waukesha County Board of Canvassers will check the Election Night input results against the voting equipment tapes and tally sheets before certifying the county canvass as official.

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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.