

Wisconsin Elections Commission

State of Wisconsin

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Wisconsinites Shatter Absentee Voting Records

MADISON, WI – Nearly 800,000 absentee votes have already been cast ahead of Tuesday’s General Election, according to new figures released by the Wisconsin Elections Commission, shattering a record of 664,597 set in 2012.

As of Monday morning, 797,740 returned absentee ballots had been recorded in the Commission’s WisVote system by municipal clerks for counting on Election Day. A total of 828,248 absentee ballots have been issued, including 650,782 in-person absentee ballots cast in clerks’ offices.

In 2012, a total of 659,444 absentee ballots were counted, compared to 639,913 absentee ballots counted in 2008. Comparable pre-election numbers of absentee ballots cast are not available because clerks were not required to track them using the state’s system as they are now.

Even though absentee voting has been growing in popularity, it is not necessarily an indicator of higher overall turnout, said Michael Haas, Wisconsin’s chief elections official. “A number of factors may be contributing to this year’s higher absentee turnout, but the long term trend has been toward increasing use of absentee voting both by mail and in clerks’ offices,” Haas said.

Voting in clerks’ offices ended in most places on Friday and in a few cities on Saturday and Sunday, Haas said, noting that mail-in absentee ballots must be returned to clerks’ offices or polling places by Tuesday in order to be counted.

The Commission is predicting that a total of 3.1 million people will cast ballots for the Tuesday, November 8 General Election. That’s 69.6 percent of Wisconsin’s 2016 voting-age population of 4,449,170, according to Census estimates. Details: <http://elections.wi.gov/node/4375>.

Updated absentee ballot statistics are available here:
<http://elections.wi.gov/publications/statistics/absentee>.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.