

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Turnout Estimated at 15 percent for August 12 Partisan Primary

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board is predicting turnout of 15 percent of eligible voters for the Partisan Primary Election on Tuesday, August 12.

Wisconsin's voters will choose among 412 candidates for federal and state offices. Some voters will also have county primaries for offices such as sheriff, there are 10 local referendums, and two small towns have local recall elections.

“While there are some hotly-contested congressional and state legislative district races, statewide interest in the primary is likely to be lower than in 2010 when turnout was 19.6 percent due to competitive Democratic and Republican primaries for governor,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B.

This year, there are statewide Democratic primaries for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general and state treasurer on the ballot, as well as Republican primaries for secretary of state and state treasurer. There are primaries in five of the eight congressional districts, five of the 17 state senate districts and 26 of the 99 assembly districts.

“We encourage voters to make their opinions count at every level of government,” Kennedy added. “Tuesday’s partisan primary election provides an opportunity to shape the ballot in November.”

To find out which candidates and referendums they will see on the ballot, voters should visit the MyVote Wisconsin website: <http://myvote.wi.gov>. A complete list of federal and state candidates is posted on the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/2014/fall>.

Historically, the highest voter turnout in a fall partisan primary since 1960 was 27.9 percent of eligible voters in September 1964. Wisconsin’s 2014 population of eligible voters is 4,400,015 people. Statistics on past voter turnout and current voter registration are available at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>.

Primary voters may only vote for candidates of one party. Wisconsin’s open primary system does not require voters to declare a party, but a voter may indicate a party preference on the ballot. The reason for indicating a party preference is that it ensures that votes for candidates of that party will be counted in the event the voter accidentally selected one or more candidates from another party.

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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.