

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Statement on Transition from G.A.B. to Elections and Ethics Commissions

MADISON, WI – Today, Governor Walker signed into law Assembly Bill 388, which eliminates the Government Accountability Board on June 30, 2016 and replaces it with two separate commissions to oversee the administration of elections and ethics.

Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B., said Board Members and the staff are prepared to work with the Secretary of the Department of Administration and the new Commissioners as they are appointed to ensure a smooth transition to the new structure.

“We are professionals who care deeply about serving voters, local election officials, candidates and officeholders, and the lobbying community,” Kennedy said. “Our commitment is to ensure continuity of service during the transition.”

The legislation sets out a process for legislative leaders and the Governor to make appointments to both commissions. Once appointed, new Commissioners will serve as non-voting members of the G.A.B. starting in February as part of the transition process. To accommodate this expanded, 18-member body, many G.A.B. meetings will be held in the State Capitol. The new commissions will also be meeting separately to select new agency administrators.

The Secretary of DOA is required to develop a plan for the transition. Under the legislation, all current G.A.B. positions will transfer to one of the two new commissions, but Kennedy does not have rights to transfer and the current Elections and Ethics Division administrators would have to apply for the new administrator positions with each Commission if they wish to transfer.

“There are still many questions about how the transition will happen, which we hope to answer in coming weeks,” Kennedy said. “2016 is a busy Presidential election year, but we will do everything we can to ensure a smooth transition and ensure the new commissions get up to speed.”

A page with news and information about the transition has been created on the G.A.B. website: www.gab.wi.gov/transition.

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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.