

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

212 East Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Post Office Box 7984
Madison, WI 53707-7984
Voice (608) 266-8005
Fax (608) 267-0500
E-mail: gab@wi.gov
<http://gab.wi.gov>



KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

Military Absentee Ballot Policy

State law provides that an individual who qualifies as a military elector may request an absentee ballot for any election, or for all elections until the individual otherwise requests or until the individual no longer qualifies as a military elector. §.6.22(4), Wis. Stats. Since military personnel do not, as a rule, notify their municipal clerk when they are relocated or when they leave the military, keeping up with their whereabouts can be frustrating and sometimes impossible.

In the past, the Federal Voting Assistance Program in Washington, D.C. has been the most reliable resource for determining if a military elector is no longer in the military service, or if a military elector has been relocated. However, since the tragedy of September 11th, the FVAPs policies with respect to military personnel have become more stringent, and they are not divulging information about the status or location of military personnel. This makes it even more difficult for municipal clerks to keep track of their military electors.

In light of these difficulties, the staff of the Government Accountability Board has implemented the following policy with respect to military voters:

- 1) The clerk must make every attempt to determine if the elector is still in the military service and/or to obtain a current military address for the elector. Resources for information in military electors include, but are not limited to, consultation with the Federal Voting Assistance Program (800-438-8683) and contact with the elector's relatives. The clerk must document what efforts were taken to determine the location or status of a military elector, and the results of those efforts.
- 2) Upon receipt of reliable information from the Federal Voting Assistance Program or immediate relatives that the elector is no longer in the military, the clerk may stop sending absentee ballots to the elector and remove the elector's name from the military elector listing. The clerk should keep documentation of this action.
- 3) When all attempts to determine the location or status of the military elector have been exhausted, and a period to include three general elections has passed without a single ballot being returned, the clerk may issue a letter to the elector stating that no more ballots will be sent, unless the elector reapplies for an absentee ballot.

We hope this policy will enable you to more efficiently assist your military electors, and help you to cut down on needless mailings.

If you have questions or comments regarding this policy, please contact the Government Accountability Board.