

# NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING

Wisconsin Elections Commission

---

Special Teleconference Meeting of the Commission

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

9:00 A.M.

Agenda

Open Session

Wisconsin Elections Commission Offices

212 E. Washington Avenue, Third Floor

Madison, Wisconsin

---

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Administrator's Report of Appropriate Meeting Notice**
- C. Certification of Spring Election Results**
- D. Request for Approval to Accept and Utilize HAVA Security Funds**
- E. Discussion of Future Meeting Dates**
- F. Adjourn**

# WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

212 EAST WASHINGTON AVENUE, 3RD FLOOR  
POST OFFICE BOX 7984  
MADISON, WI 53707-7984  
(608) 261-2028  
ELECTIONS@WI.GOV  
ELECTIONS.WI.GOV



COMMISSIONERS

BEVERLY R. GILL  
JULIE M. GLANCEY  
ANN S. JACOBS  
JODI JENSEN  
DEAN KNUDSON  
MARK L. THOMSEN, CHAIR

INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR MEAGAN WOLFE

---

**DATE:** For the April 18, 2018 Commission Meeting

**TO:** Members, Wisconsin Elections Commission

**FROM:** Meagan Wolfe, Interim Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Request for Approval to Accept and Utilize HAVA Security Funds

In March of 2018 the U.S. Congress passed the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2018 which released \$380 million of Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grant funds to state elections agencies to be used to secure elections. On March 30, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) sent a letter to the WEC announcing Wisconsin's portion of the grant award of \$6,978,318 with a state match of \$348,916 for a total of \$7,327,234. Since the initial announcement, WEC staff has been in regular contact with the EAC and the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) to learn more about the terms of the grant and the process for accepting the funds.

Through discussions with the EAC, WEC has learned the new HAVA funds may be used by state election agencies in a wide variety of ways to secure elections. The funds can be used for purposes such as purchasing hardware and software as well as funding staff positions to assist with the implementation of security measures. WEC staff has also learned more about the timing and availability of the new funds. It is expected that in the week of April 16, the EAC will send states formal award letters and grant packets. Once the grant packet is received, the funds will be made available for the states to use subject to their own approval and financial processes. For Wisconsin, once the packet is received the next step will be to submit a \$16.54 request to DOA asking for permission to accept the funds. Then, within ninety days of the packet being received from the EAC, each state is required to provide a two to three-page letter to the EAC that outlines, at a high level, how the state plans to use the new HAVA funds. The plan can be adapted and amended as necessary throughout the five-year term of the grant.

In addition to the plan that the WEC will submit to the EAC within ninety days, WEC staff will also provide a plan to the Commission for its approval. While more analysis is needed, staff currently anticipates two phases to the initial plan to utilize the new HAVA funds. The first phase will involve addressing immediate security needs of the WEC such as purchasing software to implement Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) into WisVote, requesting authority to hire new, federally funded staff, and entering into contracts to hire additional IT developers. Some of these immediate needs require Commission expenditure authority to enter in to contracts over \$100,000. In the sections below, WEC staff is recommending that the Commission approve expenditure of a small percentage of the funds once they become available to implement immediate security needs. Expedient approval of these items will give WEC staff time to implement critical security measures prior to the August and November elections.

While the immediate security needs are being implemented, WEC staff plans to simultaneously begin implementation of the second phase by seeking input from key election security partners such as DHS, DET, county clerks, municipal clerks, and the public on how the majority of the HAVA funds should be spent. WEC staff is in the process of formulating a plan to collect feedback from key stakeholders. Once feedback is received, WEC staff will present recommendations to the Commission for its consideration. WEC staff will develop recommendations for utilizing the new HAVA funds by using a very collaborative approach to make sure that the most important concerns and best practices are addressed. Staff also anticipates that the plan will be modified over the course of the grant period as the Commission reassesses progress, ongoing developments, and future needs.

### **Background and the Grant Acceptance Process**

The first step to implementing the new HAVA grant for the Commission's consideration is to request that DOA, through the authority of the Governor, accept the funds using the §16.54 process. The §16.54 process involves the completion of a form that is then submitted to the DOA budget office and is intended to result in acceptance of the funds. WEC staff has completed a draft of this form which is attached for the Commission's reference, review, and approval.

In consultation with the DOA budget office, WEC staff has completed the sections of the initial §16.54 request form that are necessary at this time. Some sections of the form, such as the exact budget plan for the full grant award, have been intentionally left blank. This is because WEC staff is still in the process of collecting feedback from key stakeholders on how the money should be spent. Once the WEC has made determinations on other major components of the grant spending plan, an amended §16.54 document can be filed with DOA. The form also indicates how the WEC plans to make the \$348,916 match to the grant over the next three fiscal years. WEC staff believes that the agency will be able to make the required contributions to the grant by the year 2020 using existing General Purpose Revenue (GPR) state funds and, therefore, an additional request for matching funds is not necessary.

Once DOA approves acceptance of the funds, the WEC can then proceed to the second step of the §16.54 process which is to request the creation of federally funded positions utilizing the grant. On April 9, 2018, the WEC withdrew its §13.10 request from consideration by the Joint Committee on Finance. The withdrawn §13.10 request is attached to this memo as a reference as it still contains information relevant to agency staffing needs. The Commission chose to withdraw the request in light of the newly available HAVA security funds. WEC will now be able to request additional, election security positions using the more predictable §16.54 process, as outlined below.

In Recommended Motion #1 below, WEC staff is asking the Commission to review the attached §16.54 form and approve immediate execution and submission of the form to DOA.

### **Immediate Security Expenditure Needs**

While WEC staff takes the time necessary to collect feedback and develop a comprehensive plan to spend the new HAVA security funds over the next five years, there are some immediate needs that require the Commission's spending authority. WEC staff is in the process of identifying options to

implement software and other security measures in anticipation of the August and November 2018 elections. While the exact recommendations have not yet been finalized because of the short timeframe between notification of the grant award and the Commission meeting, WEC staff has some general direction and recommendations for the Commission's consideration.

The Commission has delegated spending authority to the WEC Administrator to enter into contracts under \$100,000. While many of the immediate security concerns can be addressed with expenditures less than \$100,000, there are two items that may exceed this limit and will require Commission authorization. The exact solutions necessary to address immediate security concerns are not yet known, so WEC staff is presenting potential maximum expenditure amounts and options for the Commission's consideration to ensure that WEC staff has the authority to pursue the purchase as soon as the appropriate option is identified. For the Commission's consideration, below please find WEC staff's recommendations to address immediate security needs using the newly available HAVA security funds:

***Multi Factor Authentication.*** One of the priorities that WEC staff has identified for elections security is the implementation of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) into the WisVote system. MFA would require users of the WisVote system to enter a password and then a second factor, like a randomly generated number sent by email, into WisVote as part of the login process. The second factor ensures that even if a user's password is compromised, that the malicious actor would not have the second factor needed to gain access. There are a number of MFA solutions available and WEC staff has been working with DET to identify the most user friendly and technically feasible option. MFA options usually require a per user license, therefore 3,000 licenses would be needed to accommodate all users of the WisVote system. As part of Recommended Motion #2 below, WEC staff is asking the Commission for the authority to research and select the best available MFA process for a cost not to exceed \$200,000.

***Additional IT Contractors.*** To implement elections security best practices and measures, WEC staff is recommending hiring additional IT contract development staff. In the past, the agency's team of IT contractors has fluctuated between three and eight members, depending upon current initiatives and needs. Currently, the WEC employs three IT contractors including two Applications Architects and one Database Administrator. All three contractors are currently immersed full time in routine agency IT development and maintenance such as the development of electronic poll books, upgrades and maintenance to the WisVote and MyVote systems, and development and maintenance of other applications like canvass, WEDCS, and BadgerVoters. WEC staff is recommending hiring two additional IT contract developers to address immediate security needs. One of the recommended positions would focus on technical implementation of security measures, like MFA. The other position would focus on quality assurance and IT architecture. Both positions will be critical to ensuring the WEC is able to implement security best practices using the new HAVA funds. For the Commission's consideration, Recommended Motion #2 below, asks the Commission for the authority to enter into two contracts for IT developers, not to exceed \$225,000 annually.

***Additional Server and Database Environments.*** WEC IT applications are hosted on servers housed at the state Division of Enterprise Technology (DET). WEC contracts with DET to maintain the servers, databases, and environments. Many server hosting options and architectures are available to agencies whose applications are hosted with DET. One such option is an agency's designation of

their application as critical. Designating an application as critical means that DET architects the server structure for that application in a way that enhances back-ups and redundancies and ensures the function of the application can be restored and recovered quickly in the event of a cyber event or emergency. WEC staff is in the process of exploring the DET hosting tiers and identifying costs associated with moving WisVote and related applications to the highest tier available. After preliminary discussions, WEC staff does not believe moving elections applications to a higher tier will represent a one-time cost of more than \$100,000. However, moving to a higher tier will represent a higher monthly cost to the WEC for DET hosting services. WEC staff will report to the Commission any additional services purchased through DET to accomplish these upgrades.

***Additional Security Training for Clerks.*** WEC staff continues to develop in-house, interactive training tutorials for municipal clerks on election and cyber security topics. These trainings will be incorporated into the WisVote learning center and will be required for new users prior to gaining access to the system. However, additional training opportunities for municipal and county clerks is also available through federal partners. WEC staff would like to explore purchasing additional training from federal partners, such as the Center for Internet Security (MS-ISAC/DHS affiliate) that can then be made available to municipal and county clerks. More information on the CIS training offerings can be found here: <https://www.cisecurity.org/services/cis-cybermarket/training/sans-end-user/> WEC believes that adding federally available training to the in-house curriculum will create the most robust training protocol and help to ensure that all local election partners have the training tools necessary to help secure Wisconsin elections. It is not expected that this expenditure will exceed the one-time \$100,000 limit. WEC staff will report to the Commission on any expenditures on security training within the expenditure authority delegated to the agency administrator.

***Applications Management Software.*** WEC staff is exploring options to purchase database behavioral analysis and user activity logging software. These tools will help to establish baseline activity in the WisVote system and related applications and will automate processes to flag unusual activity. There are a number of software applications available either publicly or through the state enterprise that can accomplish these tasks. WEC staff is currently working with DET and other elections security partners to determine the best software solutions to meet agency needs. It is not expected that these purchases will represent a one-time cost exceeding \$100,000. WEC staff will report to the Commission on any expenditures on security software within the expenditure authority delegated to the agency administrator.

### **Creating New Positions**

Using the newly available HAVA security funds, the WEC will be able to create new, federally funded staff positions. To create federally funded positions, the WEC will need to submit an amended §16.54 request including a description of positions to be created using federal funds. The state elections agency and WEC staff has experience using this process as it was the process that was used to create positions to implement the FVAP EASE grant in 2012 as well as the original HAVA grants in the early 2000's.

In the WEC's §13.10 request submitted in December 2017, the WEC requested three additional, state funded positions including a Voting Equipment Specialist, a Voter Outreach Specialist, and an IT classified Security Specialist. WEC staff still believes these positions are critical to carrying out

the functions of the agency and to implementing security measures prior to the August and November 2018 elections. WEC staff also believes that with the newly available funds for election security, there is the opportunity to explore additional needed positions, beyond those identified in the §13.10 request. While WEC staff is still collecting feedback and exploring the best options for additional staffing, some of the positions currently in consideration include:

***IT Project Manager.*** WEC staff is looking into potential classifications and options to create a position that would manage the implementation and scheduling of agency IT projects. With the addition of security implementation into an already aggressive IT development and maintenance schedule, it is critical to have a staff member dedicated to coordinating implementation and testing efforts. Having a staff member dedicated to this task will help to ensure the agency is able to meet all security objectives as well as general system maintenance and upgrades. WEC staff also envisions this position working closely with the IT contract developers to manage and prioritize their time and efforts.

***Security Trainer.*** WEC staff believes it is also critical to explore options to create a position focused on elections security training and providing security specific support to local elections officials. Having a trainer who can focus on implementing security training for municipal and county clerks will allow current training staff to continue to focus on keeping WisVote and other system training up-to-date. A dedicated elections security trainer will also be able to expand the training curriculum to include the integration and organization of election security events such as table top exercises.

***WisVote Data Specialist.*** It is equally important for the agency to have an adequate number of WisVote specialists who are monitoring data quality and compliance in the WisVote system. WisVote specialists monitor the activity of the 3,000 WisVote users and conduct follow up with non-compliant municipalities and monitor and detect erroneous information entered in the system. Having a dedicated WisVote data specialist helps to ensure anomalies in the WisVote system are detected, mitigated, and remedied. WisVote staff currently conducts as much data quality review as possible but the agency does not have the staffing necessary to ensure that all data discrepancies are resolved by clerks and to analyze that the data communicates regarding the accuracy and security of election systems.

***Grants Accountant/Grants Manager.*** Accepting and maintaining federal grant money is a complicated process. Federal funds are subject to strict compliance with federal rules and regulations and are also subject to regular auditing of compliance with those standards. Therefore, WEC staff would like to explore options to create a position focused on the management of federal grant funds. Through prior federal audits, Wisconsin and other states have learned the importance of establishing robust monitoring, reconciliation, and auditing procedures from the outset of the grant period.

***Information Services (IS) Technical Services Professional.*** As outlined in the WEC's December 8, 2017 §13.10 request (attached), it is critical to create a position that is focused on implementing security best practices with agency technology. This position would be dedicated to managing the implementation of election security as well as serving as a liaison between WEC and election security partners such as DET and DHS. This position would also serve as the leader of the WEC

election security team as well as the main point of contact for collecting feedback and best practices from elections security partners.

***Voting Equipment Specialist.*** As is also outlined in the WEC's December 8, 2017 §13.10 request (attached), the voting equipment elections specialist position is also critical to meeting the agency's developing election security needs. This position would focus on working with vendors and clerks to implement standards and monitor compliance with the voting equipment certification and testing standards. This position would also serve as the lead for exploring options for expanded use of post-election voting equipment audit program, risk limiting audits and other potential election integrity efforts.

More needs to be done to determine the classifications and position descriptions for the positions described above. WEC staff would also like to continue to collect feedback from staff, clerks and other elections security partners to determine what additional positions might be needed to accomplish elections security goals. Positions would be requested, initially, for a four-year period. In Recommended Motion #3 below, WEC staff asks for the Commission's authority to explore positions needed to address elections security needs and to submit amended §16.54 requests to DOA in order create federally funded elections security positions as necessary.

### **Collecting Feedback from Clerks and the Public**

The next step in developing a comprehensive plan to utilize the new HAVA security funds is for WEC staff to create mechanism to collect feedback from municipalities and counties on how to best use the HAVA funds to secure elections at the state and local level. Making sure that counties, municipalities, and the public have an opportunity to contribute to the election security discussion is paramount to developing a comprehensive security strategy as well as to building public confidence in election integrity.

WEC staff is currently in the process of developing tools for collecting feedback from municipal and county partners in a way that can drive decision making for the expenditure of the majority of the new funds. It is also important to remember that the WEC's approach to elections security should remain flexible and dynamic, and new feedback and resources should be added to the plan as they become available. New resources and threats may require WEC to adjust the security approach over the course of the five-year grant. WEC staff intends to develop a plan to collect feedback and to reserve funds that can be used to adapt the plan to new challenges through the entirety of the grant period and well in to the future.

### **Recommended Motions**

The approach outlined above is consistent with the intent of the new federal funds and best practices recommended by many organizations which have focused on election security and concrete actions that can be implemented by states. WEC staff recommends that the Commission approve the following actions:

**MOTION #1:** Approve the execution and submission of the §16.54 request to accept HAVA election security grant funds to DOA for approval.

**MOTION #2:** Approve WEC staff exploring and making purchases related to immediate security needs including the following expenditures above the \$100,000 limit delegated to the WEC Administrator:

-Purchase of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) software and implementation tools and resources, one-time expenditure not to exceed \$200,000; and

-Enter into up to two annual contracts for IT development services. Each contract is not to exceed \$225,000 annually.

**MOTION #3:** Authority to submit additional §16.54 requests to create federally funded positions. WEC staff will create position descriptions and determine appropriate classifications based on immediate security needs as well as future needs as identified through feedback collected from elections security partners.

ADDENDUM TO STAR PROPOSAL DATA  
16.54 Grant Review

**2018 HAVA ELECTION SECURITY FUND  
ELECTION REFORM PAYMENTS H101  
<<PEOPLESOFT PROPOSAL ID>>  
39.011**

1. Project Description/Scope of Work:

This funding supports efforts to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, which primarily includes the enhancement of election technology and making election security improvements. Wisconsin receives funding from the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (HAVA 101) for the improvement of federal elections with these new funds focusing on Elections Security.

The grant includes addressing immediate security needs for the upcoming 2018 election cycle, such as purchasing software to implement multi-factor authentication into our WisVote system and hiring new federally funded staff to implement election security improvements and to administer the funds.

The long-term outcomes of the program are to ensure Wisconsin's elections are safe and secure.

2. Funding and Position Data

a. Federal Funds Applied For

Numeric Appropriation	Source	Revenue		FTE	New Positions*		Existing Positions	
		Type	Amount		Type	FTE	Type	
180	SEG F	Fed	\$6,978,318	3	Perm		Select	
	Select	Select	\$		Select		Select	
	Select	Select	\$		Select		Select	
	Select	Select	\$		Select		Select	
	Select	Select	\$		Select		Select	

b. State Match

Numeric Appropriation	Source	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		FTE	In Kind? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Type	Amount		Type	FTE
101	GPR	State	\$348,916		Select	Select
	Select	Select	\$		Select	Select
	Select	Select	\$		Select	Select

\*New positions listed in the 16.54 Grant Review Process require approval via a separate 16.54 Position Review process conducted by the State Budget Office.

3. Indirect Cost Reimbursement

Yes  No  Rate %  X Base \$  = Amount \$

ADDENDUM TO STAR PROPOSAL DATA  
16.54 Grant Review

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Future State Commitment beyond the Original Grant:

The state is responsible for maintaining program requirements under HAVA 101 after the federal funds are exhausted.

B. Other Oversight Required (i.e. legislative audit, etc.): None

5. Budget Information (5Ak must equal 5Bk):

A. Total Estimated Project Cost: \$ 0.00

Estimated Line Item Budget:

	FTE/YEAR	Hourly Salary	Total Cost
a. Personnel	At Least 3	Varies	\$162,240+
b. Fringe Benefits			\$64,085+
c. Travel			\$0
d. Equipment			\$0
e. Supplies			\$0
f. Contractual			\$0
g. Construction			\$0
h. Other			\$0
i. Total Direct Charges			\$0
j. Indirect Charges (99.99%)			\$0
k. Total Project Budget*			\$0.00

B. Match Requirements: 5%

a. Federal Funds	\$6,978,318
b. State Funds	\$348,916
k. Total Project Budget*	\$7,327,234

\* Inside the total box, press F9 to update the total formula calculation.

C. Allotment and Position Information:

1) New Positions: At least 3 FTE

2) Existing Positions:

ADDENDUM TO STAR PROPOSAL DATA  
16.54 Grant Review

6. Authorized Agency Representative Name and Title: Click here to enter text.	
7. Signature:	8. Date: Click here to enter text.

# WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

212 EAST WASHINGTON AVENUE, 3RD FLOOR  
POST OFFICE BOX 7984  
MADISON, WI 53707-7984  
(608) 261-2028  
ELECTIONS@WI.GOV  
ELECTIONS.WI.GOV



COMMISSIONERS

BEVERLY R. GILL  
JULIE M. GLANCEY  
ANN S. JACOBS  
JODI JENSEN  
DEAN KNUDSON  
MARK L. THOMSEN, CHAIR

ADMINISTRATOR MICHAEL HAAS

---

December 8, 2017

The Honorable Alberta Darling, Senate Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Finance  
Room 317 East, State Capitol  
PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

The Honorable John Nygren, Assembly Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Finance  
Room 309 East, State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Dear Senator Darling and Representative Nygren:

The Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) requests the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) create 3.0 FTE permanent SEG-F positions in fiscal year 2017-18 with an end date of June 30, 2018 and provide \$113,200 SEG-F expenditure authority to s. 20.510(1)(x) in fiscal year 2017-18. The WEC also requests that the Committee create 3.0 FTE permanent GPR positions in fiscal year 2018-19 with the intent that they be included in the agency's base budget and fully funded during the 2019-21 biennial budget. In fiscal year 2018-19, these positions will be funded with existing GPR funds, estimated to be \$226,300. As a result of these actions, the agency will spend remaining Help America Vote Act federal funds on other elections administration functions more quickly than previously estimated, thereby reducing the GPR lapse from s. 20.510(1)(a) required by Act 59 at the end of fiscal year 2018-19 by \$339,500 from \$912,000 to \$572,500. As the Administrator of the Wisconsin Elections Commission, I will represent the agency at the quarterly meeting of the Joint Committee on Finance. If I am unable to attend, Meagan Wolfe, the Deputy Administrator, will represent the agency.

## Summary of Request

Pursuant to § 13.101(2) and § 13.101(3), Wis. Stats., the Wisconsin Elections Commission requests the JCF create 3.0 SEG-F positions and SEG-F expenditure authority in FY18 and 3.0 permanent GPR positions in FY19 to enable the Elections Administration team to maintain a comprehensive and current knowledge of federal and state election laws and procedures to complete state-level tasks and to provide training and support to local clerks as well as to maintain cybersecurity of the agency's IT applications. This involves hiring an IS Technical Services Professional to focus on cybersecurity of WEC IT applications, an Elections Specialist to focus on the security and certification of voting equipment, polling place set up, and ballot security procedures, and an Elections Specialist to focus on voter services and outreach, including maintaining and updating public information resources related to voter registration and Photo ID requirements.

**FY-18**

# FTE	Position	Hourly Wage	# Hours	Salary	Fringe Rate	Fringe	Salary & Fringe
1	Elections Specialist	\$25	1040	\$26,000	0.395	\$ 10,270	\$36,270
1	Elections Specialist	\$25	1040	\$26,000	0.395	\$ 10,270	\$36,270
1	IS Technical Services Prof	\$28	1040	\$29,120	0.395	\$ 11,502	\$40,622
						TOTAL	<b>\$113,162</b>

**FY-19**

# FTE	Position	Hourly Wage	# Hours	Salary	Fringe Rate	Fringe	Salary & Fringe
1	Elections Specialist	\$25	2080	\$52,000	0.395	\$20,540	\$72,540
1	Elections Specialist	\$25	2080	\$52,000	0.395	\$20,540	\$72,540
1	IS Technical Services Prof	\$28	2080	\$58,240	0.395	\$23,005	\$81,245
						TOTAL	<b>\$226,325</b>

**Background**

In the 2015 – 2017 biennial budget for the Government Accountability Board, the State’s election staff was reduced from 35.75 to 31.75 FTE positions. In the 2017 – 2019 biennial budget, position authority for the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) was further reduced to 25.75 FTE positions. Together, this represents a 28 percent reduction in state-level elections administration staff over two budget cycles, despite the fact that both the Legislature and ongoing events have continually increased the agency’s portfolio of duties to ensure the accuracy and integrity of Wisconsin elections.

Assessing the impact of the staff reduction must start with an understanding of the uniqueness of Wisconsin’s decentralized election administration structure and the challenges it creates. Most states conduct elections at the county level. County clerks have important roles in Wisconsin elections, but the state’s 1,853 municipal clerks directly conduct the voter registration and voting process. The WEC is responsible for training and supporting both county and municipal clerks, as well as school district clerks. The WEC is also responsible for developing resources for clerks to train their election inspectors who work at the polls.

Approximately two-thirds of Wisconsin municipal clerks work part-time, and many have other full-time jobs and are limited by their governing bodies in the number of hours they may work on all their clerk duties. Hundreds of municipal clerk positions turn over every year. Also, many clerks in smaller municipalities do not have the in-house IT expertise or support that is essential to working securely in WisVote, the statewide voter registration system. Even when there are not significant legislative changes, WEC staff must ensure that each new municipal clerk has the training and guidance necessary to conduct elections as efficiently, accurately and securely as an experienced clerk with a full complement of election and IT staff. The decentralized structure also requires WEC staff to provide training and support to clerk staff working in WisVote, and to manage the system access of nearly 3,000 WisVote users.

These recent reductions in elections agency staff pose a risk to the smooth administration of elections in Wisconsin, and also create a greater challenge for the agency and local election officials to meet

their legal obligations to fully implement federal and state laws. In the past, the Legislative Audit Bureau has noted that the former State Elections Board and Government Accountability Board were unable to keep up with the number of tasks assigned to them. This challenge will only increase when the reduced staffing level results in similar and more significant difficulties in the future.

The reduction in the staffing level for the Elections Administration team resulted in the elimination of critical positions that focus specifically on voting equipment testing and voter services. The voting equipment specialist is traditionally responsible for overseeing the testing and certification of voting systems while also providing guidance on voting system security to county and municipal election officials. He or she also oversees the post-election voting equipment audit process and monitors updates to previously approved voting systems in Wisconsin to ensure continued compliance with certification standards.

The voter services specialist's main responsibility was delivering clear, concise and comprehensive information about the voter registration and voting processes to the public. The position developed and maintained the agency's voter information website, MyVote Wisconsin, which displays information such as polling place locations and sample ballots while also serving as the online voter registration portal and the online ballot delivery system for military and overseas voters. The position also assisted individual voters and clerks using the online systems, and ensured the collection of absentee ballot information from municipal clerks as required by the U.S. Department of Justice.

As outlined in previous correspondence to the Legislature and Governor, the WEC's statutory responsibilities have not diminished – and in fact continue to expand due to legislative directives, voting trends and current events. The best example of new responsibilities and priorities is the agency's comprehensive election security planning, which is a significant expansion of previous efforts in this area due to the risks related to interference by foreign government actors or other parties. The agency has taken on the mission of evaluating and implementing best practices with regard to the security of Wisconsin's election systems and infrastructure, including the voter registration system, voting equipment, voting locations and results reporting.

The necessary and expanded attention to election security matters diverts already limited staff and resources from other core functions of the agency. Every member of the WEC staff is involved in the effort to incorporate election security practices and information into agency tasks as well as the training and tools provided to local election officials. The IS Technical Services Professional position is intended to focus on the cybersecurity of WEC IT applications. In partnership with organizations such as the Department of Homeland Security, MS-ISAC, and the Division of Enterprise Technology, this position would review and implement best practices to protect WisVote and other IT applications, recommend and provide tools to ensure that agency staff and local election officials maintain robust cybersecurity, engage in ethical hacker exercises to identify and correct IT vulnerabilities, and serve as a point person to implement the agency's overall elections security plan.

### **Request Meets Statutory Criteria of § 13.101(3), Wis. Stats.**

The agency request meets the criteria for supplementing its general operations funding set out in Wis. Stats. § 13.101 (3)(a)1. The creation of these positions and the increased federal expenditure authority in FY18 will address critical functions that affect the administration of elections as well as the public's confidence in the integrity of elections. They also relate to functions that are at risk of inadequate attention as existing staff attempts to remain current with other ongoing and pressing priorities. The agency request is authorized and submitted pursuant to a unanimous vote of the Wisconsin Elections Commission at its meeting of November 28, 2017.

## Request

The Wisconsin Elections Commission requests the Joint Committee on Finance create 3.0 FTE permanent SEG-F positions in fiscal year 2017-18 with an end date of June 30, 2018 and provide \$113,200 SEG-F expenditure authority to s. 20.510(1)(x) in fiscal year 2017-18. The WEC also requests that the Committee create 3.0 FTE permanent GPR positions in fiscal year 2018-19 with the intent that they be included in the agency's base budget and fully funded during the 2019-21 biennial budget. In fiscal year 2018-19, these positions will be funded with existing GPR funds, estimated to be \$226,300. As a result of these actions, the agency will spend remaining Help America Vote Act federal funds on other elections administration functions more quickly than previously estimated, thereby reducing the GPR lapse from s. 20.510(1)(a) required by Act 59 at the end of fiscal year 2018-19 by \$339,500 from \$912,000 to \$572,500.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Michael Haas, Administrator  
Wisconsin Elections Commission

cc: Legislative Fiscal Bureau (2)  
Department of Administration (45)  
Wisconsin Elections Commission Members