

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@wisconsin.gov
<http://gab.wi.gov>



JUDGE DAVID G. DEININGER
Chairperson

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

DATE: January 27, 2012

TO: Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
City of Milwaukee Election Commission
Wisconsin County Clerks
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson
Election Division Administrator
Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: Redistricting Update #8: Preparing for the February Primary

As you know, G.A.B. staff and county and municipal clerks have been working feverishly to prepare for the February 2012 Spring Primary. I would like to take a moment to commend Wisconsin's county and municipal clerks for their diligence and their patience during these difficult times. We all acknowledge that there is a lot of work to do related to redistricting, in very short period of time. G.A.B. staff are committed to continuing to work in partnership with Wisconsin's clerks to resolve outstanding issues and help get the work done.

That being said, we all understand that there is a finite amount of time between now and the February primary, and a limited number of staff available to work on Redistricting. This is true for both your local offices and for us. With that in mind, we have some suggestions to help you prioritize the redistricting work that needs to be done in order to be ready for the February Primary. We also want to be prepared for Election Day in the event that not all of the clean-up is complete. This is a possibility that we all need to be prepared for. Here are some recommendations:

- **Review your voters who are on the absentee list first.** Absentee ballots will start getting issued shortly, and you want to be sure you are sending your voters the correct ballots. If you use SVRS for absentee, it is particularly important to resolve absentee voters who have no district combo or are assigned to the wrong district.
- **Review the district assignments for all voters who return absentee ballots BEFORE you send the ballots to the polling place.** If you continue to fix voters after you issue absentee ballots, the district assignment for these voters may have changed by the time the ballot gets returned. Make sure you send the ballots to the updated polling place so that your poll workers will find them on the poll book. If you determine that the wrong ballot style was mailed to the voter, please contact the voter immediately to resolve the issue.
- **Be prepared to delay printing poll books until you have completed your redistricting work.** This will allow you the greatest amount of time to review and correct your exceptions. Printing poll books before you have completed the work could cause larger problems at the polling place. Voters are already unsure where to vote due to redistricting. Having voters printed on the wrong poll books will only exacerbate the confusion at the polling place.

- **Remember that polling place activities have changed due to the new Voter Photo ID law.** These new changes may cause some delays at the polling place. That, in addition to redistricting, may be stressful for voters and for poll workers. Having the cleanest data before you print poll books will help reduce problems and stress.
- **Give your poll workers instructions on who to call if a voter believes they are registered and should be voting at that polling place, but they do not appear on the poll book.** There are likely to be some voters who do not appear on the poll book where they think they should. In some cases, the voter may not know their polling place changed, and may need to be directed to a different polling place. In other cases, SVRS could have incorrect information (most likely to due to voters not being properly districted) that caused the voter to appear on the wrong poll book. Having someone in the clerk's office available to help answer these questions may reduce the need for voters to re-register on Election Day. This is particularly problematic if they re-register in the wrong district. As usual, G.A.B. will also have staff available on Election Day to help support clerks if they are not sure how to direct the voter.
- **Have your poll workers carefully review the address of all Election Day Registrations to confirm the voter is registering in the correct districts.** Some voters may be unsure of their polling place after Redistricting and may try to register at the wrong place. Please be prepared to direct voters to the correct polling place if necessary.
- **Manually assign your voters to the correct district combos to correct problems that are still outstanding.** Many clerks have reported incidents to the G.A.B. and we are reviewing them as quickly as we can. In the event that we do not get your incident resolved by the time you are issuing ballots or printing poll books, you can manually assign the impacted voters to the correct district combo to get the problem(s) fixed in the short term.
- **If you open an incident, check SVRS periodically to see if it has been resolved.** In some cases, G.A.B. staff have resolved incidents but have not yet notified the clerk that it is resolved. Please feel free to check SVRS if you are not sure. Please however, do not open a 2nd incident if you already opened one. That only causes further delays in processing.
- **If your incident does not impact the February Primary, please be patient.** G.A.B. staff are prioritizing incidents that impact the February Primary first. For example, district combo updates that have no voters, district combo updates for districts that are not on the primary ballot, or problems for municipalities that do not have a February primary will be prioritized lower. These incidents will be addressed, but we may not get to them until after the Primary. Please be patient in the meantime, and allow us to focus on the most critical incidents.
- **Updated resources are available.** G.A.B. staff have created a Frequently Asked Questions document that is posted on the Redistricting page on the G.A.B. website, and is attached to this memorandum. The updated Redistricting training guide is also available on the Redistricting page. <http://gab.wi.gov/clerks/redistricting>
- **You will continue to get communications from G.A.B. regarding Redistricting, and other updates related to the February Primary.** We know that clerks are frustrated whenever you are inundated with communications from G.A.B. We respect that and try to minimize the number of e-mails sent to clerks. Please continue to visit the Recent Clerk Communications page though, because further updates will continue to be posted.

Again, I would like to thank our clerk partners for all of your efforts during Redistricting. Please continue to report incidents on our Incident website, <http://wisapps.wi.gov/sites/GAB/Incident/default.aspx>. Thanks.

cc: Ross Hein
Elections Supervisor