

Wisconsin Elections Commission

State of Wisconsin

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Update on Federal Election Security Funding

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Elections Commission will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, April 18, to discuss plans to spend nearly \$7 million in federal 2018 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Election Security Fund grants.

“We are developing options for the Commission to address immediate election security needs,” said Interim Administrator Meagan Wolfe. “We are also making plans to seek input from key election security partners such as Homeland Security, the Division of Enterprise Technology, local election officials and the public on how the majority of the HAVA funds should be spent.”

The Commission will discuss the process for obtaining administrative approval to accept the grant and begin spending the new federal funds to further enhance election security.

Due to the availability of the new federal grant funds, Wolfe consulted with Elections Commission Chair Mark Thomsen and on Monday withdrew the Commission’s request to Joint Committee on Finance for supplemental spending authority.

Staff recommendations to the Commission will be released with meeting materials a few days before the meeting at 9 a.m. Wednesday, April 18:

<http://elections.wi.gov/about/meetings/2018/april-18-special-teleconference>.

Background

In December 2017, the WEC made a request to the Joint Committee on Finance for authority to create three positions to address election cyber security, voting equipment security, and voter services and outreach needs. JCF had not taken action on the request.

In March 2018, Congress appropriated \$380 million under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to be distributed to the states to improve election administration, including technology enhancements and election security. Wisconsin’s share of the funds is \$6,978,318, according to the US Election Assistance Commission.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.