

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor • Madison, WI 53703 • gab@wi.gov • (608) 266-8005 • Help Desk (608) 261-2028 • <http://gab.wi.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 14, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Reid Magney, 608-267-7887

Five-Year Election Plan Approved by Joint Committee on Finance

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board's five-year, \$17.3 million plan for state elections was approved Tuesday, October 13, by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance.

Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B., said JCF approval enables the agency to accept almost \$4 million in federal funds through the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). It also allows the G.A.B. to continue funding election administration initiatives that will continue to improve Wisconsin's nationally recognized approach to conducting fair, transparent elections.

The 2009-2014 Election Administration Plan is designed to upgrade and modernize elections over the next five years, and is required under HAVA. It responds to requests for change from the G.A.B.'s customers (voters) and partners (clerks). While many of the plan's goals will affect how clerks do their jobs, it also includes calls to study several proposed changes in the way people will be able to vote, including:

- early voting/streamlined absentee voting
- improvements to polling places
- improving voter registration efficiency, including online registration
- expanding voting methods, including by mail, phone and Internet
- changing primary election dates.

Many of the election changes to be explored during five-year plan would have to be approved by the Legislature and Governor. The entire plan is available online at: <http://elections.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=17254&locid=47>.

Nathaniel E. Robinson, elections division administrator, said that prior to JCF approval, the visionary and ambitious plan was thoroughly scrutinized and improved by members of the public and election officials.

“That invaluable input helped us craft a plan which reflects Wisconsin's continued commitment to conducting elections in ways that produce public confidence in the results,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy pledged to keep the public involved. “As we move forward with implementation of the plan, our staff will continue to involve local election officials and members of the public in the development of initiatives to improve the administration of Wisconsin elections,” Kennedy said.

The plan is now being submitted to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, which administers HAVA funds. The Chair of the U.S. EAC, Gineen Beach, is scheduled to visit the G.A.B. offices on October 19 and 20 to meet with the agency staff, state government officials and local election officials, and to discuss the five-year plan.

###

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. Additional information about the mission of the G.A.B. may be obtained by telephone at **1-608-266-8005**, by electronic mail at **gab@wi.gov**, or through the Internet at **<http://gab.wi.gov>**.