

# State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 20, 2010

**TO:** Wisconsin County Clerks  
Milwaukee County Election Commission

**FROM:** Nathaniel E. Robinson  
Elections Division Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Government Accountability Board's Canvass Reporting System Protocol  
Effective for the November 2, 2010 General Election Canvass Process

For reporting election results for the September 14, 2010 Partisan Primary canvass, county clerks used the new electronic G.A.B. Canvass Reporting System. On October 11, 2010, the Board voted unanimously to adopt this system for the submission of the November 2, 2010 General Election canvass results and for reporting subsequent canvass results.

What is the electronic G.A.B. Online Canvass Reporting System and how does it work? This system is an on-line application by which the county clerks provide election results electronically. County clerks may enter data into the Canvass Reporting System either by manual entry or upload from another data source such as an Excel spreadsheet or voting equipment cumulating software.

When data entry is completed, a date and time-stamped Certification Report is printed directly from the Canvass Reporting System. The Certification Report consists of a tabular statement of results by reporting unit, a summary statement which contains the total votes cast for the office and the number of total votes cast for each candidate and "scattering," and the certification of the county board of canvassers. The county board of canvassers signs the certification, and the hard-copy Certification Report is sent to the G.A.B. by overnight delivery. G.A.B. staff compares the date and time on the hard-copy report with the last update made by the county clerk in the Canvass Reporting System. The hard-copy report must reflect a date/time stamp that is later than the last update in the Canvass Reporting System.

For the September 14, 2010 Partisan Primary canvass, Board staff provided guidance for consistency and requested county clerks to submit canvass results in the recommended format. We are pleased to report that all 72 counties entered primary election results into the new system. However, several county clerks sent paper-copy reports in the format previously used by the county, rather than the Certification Report printed from the Canvass Reporting System. Upon notification, most county clerks printed the Certification Report, called in their board of canvassers to sign the report and sent the report to the G.A.B. in a timely fashion. Even after repeated requests, one county clerk refused to use the "Certification Report."

Action the Government Accountability Board took: Wis. Stats § 7.60, "County canvass," gives the Board authority to prescribe the format in which county canvass results are to be submitted to Board staff. For the November 2, 2010 General Election and for going forward, the Board has adopted the following protocol that will govern the submission of canvass results.

## 1. Format of Canvass Reports

It is the Board's policy that beginning with the November 2, 2010, General Election, all county clerks must continue to input election results into the Canvass Reporting System and use the "Certification Report" from the G.A.B. Canvass Reporting System for the official canvass report. The official canvass report contains the following:

- A. Certification of the Board of Canvassers: The certification is signed by the three members of the county board of canvassers. If corrections must be made to the tabular statement, canvassers should not sign the certificate until the corrections are made in the G.A.B. Canvass Reporting System, the report rerun and corrections verified by the members of the board of canvassers. The board of canvassers certifies that the results contained in the canvass report are true and accurate, and the certificate includes any corrections made to the report during the canvass meeting.
- B. Tabular Statement of Votes Cast: The Tabular Statement of Votes Cast is a detail of the number of votes cast for each candidate in each ward or combination of wards for each office or referendum. Write-in votes should be summed together in one scattering column for each office by the county clerk when reporting federal and state office results. Write-in votes for registered write-in candidates shall be listed separately in the canvass reporting system. If any votes are rejected, the board of canvassers shall specify the reasons in the minutes of the board of canvassers meeting. Referenda questions results are reported by "Yes" votes and "No" votes. There is no scattering column for a referendum question.
- C. Summary Statement: The summary statement is a tally of the Tabular Statement of Votes Cast. Each statement shall include the total number of votes cast in the county for each office; the names of all ballot candidates for each office, the number of votes cast for each candidate in each office, the number of scattering votes cast in each office, and the number of votes cast for and against any question submitted at a referendum.

## 2. Reporting Units

The G.A.B. Canvass Reporting System provides tools for county clerks to use to verify that all wards in the county are entered correctly in the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) in a consistent and uniform manner in accordance with the standards listed below.

- A. All wards in a county must be accounted for, even if there is no one living there and no votes will be cast in that reporting unit. This standard requires that every parcel of land in the state be identified with a ward number, and that a particular election is set-up in SVRS to include every ward in the state for that election.
- B. Reporting unit names must identify a ward or combination of wards. Reporting units must not be reported by aldermanic districts. If a reporting unit is a combination of wards that also encompass an aldermanic district, the name of the reporting unit may include the indication such as "Wards 4 & 5 (Ald 1)." At no time may the aldermanic district number come before the ward identifiers in the reporting unit name.
- C. If a municipality is not split by wards, one reporting unit is created in SVRS with the label "Ward 1."
- D. If a municipality has more than one ward but will report results in a single reporting unit, the reporting unit in SVRS is created with a label such as "Wards 1-7."

- E. Ward combinations must be reported sequentially by leading number in the reporting unit name. For example: Wards 1 & 2, 5 – 8, 10; followed by Wards 3 & 4, and then, Ward 9.
- F. If a municipality lies in more than one county, a ward number should not be repeated in each county. The wards in a municipality should be sequential, regardless of which county the municipality lies. For example: Ward 1 in County A, Wards 2 & 3 in County B and Ward 4 in County C.
- G. In partisan primaries or elections, reporting units cannot include wards that are in different assembly, state senate or congressional districts.

Questions about how to use the G.A.B. Canvass Reporting System, and requests for assistance should be directed to the G.A.B. Help Desk at (608) 261-2028, or [GABHelpDesk@wi.gov](mailto:GABHelpDesk@wi.gov).