

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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DATE: October 7, 2015

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

FROM: Michael Haas, Elections Division Administrator

SUBJECT: Legislative Proposals Regarding G.A.B. and Campaign Finance Changes

This afternoon two bills were introduced in the Legislature which would make significant changes to the administration of elections and to the campaign finance rules in Wisconsin. We are notifying local election officials via this High Priority communication because legislative leaders have indicated that the Legislature may act in the near future, at least on one of the bills, and we want to ensure that county and municipal election officials have adequate opportunity to provide any input and feedback to the Legislature.

One proposed bill would eliminate the Government Accountability Board and create two separate commissions in its place; one commission to administer election laws and the other to administer and enforce statutes related to campaign finance, lobbying, and the code of ethics for public officials. Both bills are attached.

G.A.B. staff is currently reviewing the bills to assess their impact and potential advantages and disadvantages, and will present its analysis to the Government Accountability Board at its meeting on October 20, 2015. The staff's analysis will be posted to the agency's website along with other Board materials next Thursday or Friday.

We encourage local election officials to ask questions to better understand the bills and their impact on your duties and responsibilities, both in the area of elections and campaign finance administration. We also encourage you to contact your legislators as well as members of the election committees in the State Senate and State Assembly to provide your input. If you provide written input or testimony to legislators, feel free to forward a copy to us at gab@wi.gov.

In previous public comments, the Assembly Speaker stated that the Assembly may act on the bill to restructure the G.A.B. on October 20, 2015. We have not been advised of any date for public hearings on the bills but will post clerk communications regarding those dates when any hearings are scheduled.