

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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August Primary Is Just Two Weeks Away: G.A.B. Issues Flier on Voter Rights and Responsibilities

MADISON, WI – With Wisconsin’s partisan primary just two weeks away on August 14, the Government Accountability Board today issued an updated flier on voter rights and responsibilities.

“It is important for voters to know their rights and responsibilities,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “Being well informed is the best defense against complications at the polling place, including frivolous challenges to a voter’s eligibility.”

“To exercise your right to vote, you must be properly registered,” Kennedy said. “When you register in the 20 days before an election or on Election Day, it is your responsibility to provide proper proof of residence.” It can be a current and valid Wisconsin driver license or state ID card, but also a tax bill, a lease, a utility or cell phone bill, or a paycheck. It cannot be a sales receipt or a piece of junk mail. A list of acceptable documents is on the Board’s website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/registration-voting>.

The two-page flier titled “Wisconsin Voter Rights and Responsibilities” also includes important information about observing elections and challenging voters. It is available online at <http://gab.wi.gov/rights>.

“Our system of open, transparent elections depends on members of the public serving as observers at polling places,” said Kennedy. “However, in recent elections we have received disturbing reports and complaints about unacceptable, illegal behavior by observers. Voters expect a calm setting in which to exercise their right to vote.”

As part of its “Back to Basics” plan for the Fall Election Cycle, the G.A.B. is putting an emphasis on training local election officials to deal with boisterous, disruptive election observers, said Elections Division Administrator Nat Robinson.

“Observers may not speak to or intimidate voters. Poll workers do not have to put up with observers who bully them or question their actions,” Robinson said. “The Chief Inspector is in charge at each polling place, and must be obeyed. Our training will underscore that Chief Inspectors are empowered by law to order troublemakers to leave, and to call law enforcement if they refuse.”

Included in the flier is a warning that anyone who disobeys an order to leave a polling place may be subject to arrest and a fine of \$1,000, six months in jail or both.

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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.