

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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State's Chief Elections Official to Testify before Presidential Commission on Election Administration

MADISON, WI – Kevin J. Kennedy, director and general counsel of the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, will testify Friday morning before the [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#) in Cincinnati, OH.

President Obama appointed the commission in March 2013 following his State of the Union speech pledge to identify non-partisan ways to shorten lines at polling places, promote the efficient conduct of elections, and provide better access to the polls for all voters. Its mission is to identify best practices in election administration and make recommendations to improve the voting experience for all Americans.

Kennedy is testifying on a panel of state election officials who are discussing best practices from their states that could be adopted nationally. Kennedy will highlight Wisconsin's largely non-partisan system of election administration, and the importance of using data and new technology to improve the voting experience.

"Election administrators, legislators and government executives need to know and believe that 'It is all about the voter,'" Kennedy said. "As we craft laws and develop administrative procedures for elections, we have to focus on the principle that the voters and their right to participate in the political process are paramount."

"What tools do election administrators use to serve the voter? Data, technology and an unabated commitment to serve!" Kennedy said. "I would like to share how my state and its more than 2,000 state and local election officials are drawing on data and using technology to fuel our commitment to enable our voters to exercise their constitutionally protected right to select our leaders and shape the future direction of Wisconsin, local government and the country."

Kennedy has been Wisconsin's chief elections officer for 30 years, first as executive director of the former State Elections Board and since 2008 as director of the Government Accountability Board.

Wisconsin has received consistently-high rankings in national surveys of voter turnout and other measures of effective election administration. Wisconsin ranked first in the nation in the [Pew Center's Election Performance Index](#) for its performance in the 2008 Presidential Election.

Rankings for 2012 have not yet been released. In his testimony, Kennedy attributes Wisconsin's success to the G.A.B.'s local election partners, the 72 county clerks and 1,852 municipal clerks.

The Commission is comprised of distinguished election administrators and representatives of successful customer service-oriented businesses who bring experience drawn from the private and public sectors to help identify best practices in election administration.

The panel Kennedy is testifying on includes Ohio's Secretary of State John Husted and his deputy Matt Damschroeder, Ohio's director of elections; and Doug Lewis, the executive director of the Election Center – National Association of State Election Officials. Other state official panels Friday include representatives from California, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. Later Friday, Professor Barry Burden of the University of Wisconsin's Political Science Department will testify with a panel of academics.

A copy of Mr. Kennedy's prepared remarks is attached.

Video of the Commission's meeting Friday will be streamed live on the web:

<https://www.supportthevoter.gov/commission-meeting-livestream/>

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The Government Accountability Board is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The Board is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members.