

# Government Accountability Board

## State of Wisconsin

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## Recall Petition Update 7: Funding and Extension Requests

Madison, WI – Government Accountability Board Director Kevin Kennedy issued a statement today regarding the Board’s potential requests for funding and for additional time to complete its work reviewing the six recall petitions:

In the last several days the G.A.B. has given members of the Legislature two important communications about the recall petition review process itself and the request for funding to pay for the work. They are available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/other/2012-recall-expense-request> and here: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/other/memo-legislators-recall-review-2-23-12>.

The letter seeking funds explained that we may need some additional time to complete our review. There are two reasons for an extension:

- **Additional time to complete the data entry and duplicate check of the Lt. Governor petitions.** While we had considered using statistical sampling methods to check for duplicates on the Lt. Governor petitions, we have decided to treat them exactly the same as the Governor and four State Senate recall petitions. That means having all the names entered into a database so they can be sorted to identify and eliminate duplicates.
- **Election scheduling issues.** Wisconsin’s municipal clerks need time to complete work on the April 3 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary before starting their preparation for possible recall elections. We hope to schedule all elections on the same dates to reduce costs, and we also need to avoid scheduling conflicts with Memorial Day.

By state statute, the recall election must be held “on the Tuesday of the 6<sup>th</sup> week commencing after the date” the Board finds a recall petition to be sufficient and orders the election. Wis. Stat. s. 9.10(3)(b). If the Board ordered recall elections on the current March 19 deadline, an election would be called for May 1, and if that becomes a primary election, the general election date would be May 29, the day after Memorial Day.

At a special meeting on March 12, the Government Accountability Board members will consider my request for authorization to seek court permission for an extension of time to complete the recall petition review process. By March 12, we will have a better idea of how much longer the duplicate check will take, as well as valuable feedback from local clerks about election scheduling issues.

In recent days, both sides have criticized the G.A.B.'s recall review procedures and decisions, sometimes without knowing all the facts. Some claim we are not doing a thorough enough job while others accuse the agency of undue delay. Some observers wrongly assume that the G.A.B. is motivated by favoritism towards one side or the other.

Our professional, nonpartisan staff is moving as quickly as possible to complete a major, unbudgeted project resulting from the current, highly-charged political environment. To their credit, the staff continues its work without allowing the polarized debate to affect their judgment or decisions. We are following the same rules set by state Statutes and court decisions that we have always followed, except as modified by the Waukesha County Circuit Court. We are always mindful of the cost to taxpayers. We cannot and will not change the rules in the middle of the game, even if the parties to the recall efforts have made strategic decisions that appear to lessen the G.A.B.'s workload. We hope that the parties and the public will exercise some patience and understanding while we complete the duties required of us by law.

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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.