

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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“Top 10 Things a Wisconsin Voter Should Know for Election Day”

MADISON, WI – The Government Accountability Board today released its list of the top 10 things a Wisconsin voter should know for the Recall Election, Tuesday, June 5.

The number one thing voters should keep in mind is to be patient and use common sense, said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B.

“The eyes of the nation will be on Wisconsin in the coming days, and we realize this recall election is an intense time for the voters, for election officials and the candidates,” Kennedy said. “But whether it’s exercising some patience while waiting in line to vote or using some common sense about not wearing campaign apparel or buttons to the polling place, people can make this election a lot easier on themselves and everyone else involved.”

“Wisconsin’s 1,923 local election officials (county and municipal clerks) are doing a yeoman’s job preparing for this unplanned and unbudgeted-for recall election on a very tight schedule and with limited resources,” Kennedy said. “Evidence of that hard work is the large number of absentee ballots they have already issued for this recall election.”

As of noon today, 164,848 absentee ballots had been issued by Wisconsin’s local election officials who track them using the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS), compared to 130,434 by midday Tuesday, May 29, Kennedy said. Approximately one-third of clerks use SVRS to track absentee ballots. Additional historical data about absentee voting in past elections is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/node/2375>.

Number two on the list is that voters should know their rights and responsibilities before heading out to the polls, Kennedy said, which includes the ability to register to vote on Election Day. A list of voting rights and responsibilities is attached, and also available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/rights>.

“Election Day registration ensures that everyone who is qualified to vote will get to vote,” said Kennedy. “Unlike many other states, Wisconsin has registration at the polls, so very few voters will likely be forced to vote a provisional ballot.”

To register on Election Day, Wisconsin voters must provide proof of residence, which includes a current utility bill, lease, university ID card or other official document showing the voter’s name

and current address. Voters who have a valid Wisconsin driver's license or state ID card will be required to use their license number to complete the registration form. Otherwise, they may use the last four digits of their Social Security number.

Third on the list, voters can check their registration status with their municipal clerk, or on the state's Voter Public Access website: <https://vpa.wi.gov>.

Elections Division Administrator Nat Robinson encourages registered voters to double-check their registration online. The site allows voters to look up their voter registration information, sample ballot information and polling place locations.

"Voter Public Access is very handy, and connects directly to the data in the Statewide Voter Registration System," Robinson said. "If you don't find your registration information, call the municipal clerk's office and make sure you're ready for Tuesday. But if you are not on the list, don't worry. You can still register on Election Day at the polling place."

Fourth, voters should know what to do if they run into a problem at the polls. "First, ask for the Chief Inspector," Robinson said. "If you are not satisfied, check with your municipal clerk. If the problem involves possible election crimes, contact your local police department or district attorney's office. If you are still not satisfied, contact our office to file a complaint or leave a comment."

"If you see voter fraud, voter intimidation, electioneering or misconduct by election officials, we want to hear about it," said Robinson. "Voters can go online and report problems at <http://gab.wi.gov/complaints>, or they can call 1-866-VOTE-WIS."

The remaining Top 10 things a voter should know are:

- 5. Photo ID is not required:** Wisconsin's Voter Photo ID Law has been enjoined by the courts, and an ID is not required of voters at the clerk's office for in-person absentee voting or at the polling place on Election Day. However, a driver license or state ID number is necessary to register to vote or to prove residency when registering on Election Day if the address on the license or ID is current.
- 6. Election observers are welcome in Wisconsin:** Election observers are welcome at every polling place, but they must follow the instructions of the chief election inspector, and may not interact with voters. Rules for election observers are available at the polling place and on the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/clerks/education-training/election-observers>.
- 7. Ballot mistakes are not fatal:** If you make a mistake when voting, you may ask for a new paper ballot, up to a total of three. In the case of touch-screen voting equipment, the voter will be able to review ballot choices before affirming the final vote.

- 8. Leave political items at home:** Voters are asked not to wear political clothing or paraphernalia to the polling place on Election Day. The chief election inspector may ask voters to leave the polling place if they are judged to be electioneering or creating a disturbance.
- 9. Get in line before the polls close:** Voters standing in line waiting to vote when the polling place closes at 8 p.m. on Election Day will be permitted to vote.
- 10. Rules for challenging a voter:** There are specific criteria and limitations on challenging a person's eligibility to vote. The chief election inspector can explain the challenge process and provide the voter and the challenger with explanatory documents.

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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.