

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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“Top 10 Things Voters Should Know for Election Day”

MADISON, WI – The Government Accountability Board today released its list of the top 10 things Wisconsin voters should know for Election Day, Tuesday, November 6.

The number one thing voters should know is where to vote and whether they’re currently registered.

“Wisconsin voters have a new website they can use to find the most accurate information about their polling place and check their registration status,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “If you’re not sure, take a few minutes to visit the My Vote Wisconsin website: <https://myvote.wi.gov>. It could save you time and headaches on Election Day.”

Many people who have not voted since the last presidential election may find that their polling place has changed, Kennedy noted. My Vote Wisconsin also has sample ballots so voters can familiarize themselves with their choices before they arrive in the voting booth.

People who do not have internet access can check their status with their municipal clerk’s office.

Number two on the list is that voters can register at the polling place on Election Day.

“If you check My Vote Wisconsin and find you’re not registered, don’t panic,” Kennedy said. “Election Day registration ensures that everyone who is qualified to vote will get to vote. Wisconsin, unlike many other states, has had registration at the polls since 1976, so very few voters will likely be forced to vote on a provisional ballot.”

To register on Election Day, Wisconsin voters must provide a proof of residence document. It can be a driver license or state ID card with the voter’s current address. It can also be a current utility bill, lease, university ID card or other official document showing the voter’s name and current address. For a list of acceptable documents, visit the G.A.B. website. You must be a resident of your ward for 28 consecutive days to register, but the document does not need to be 28 days old. Voters who have a valid Wisconsin driver license will be required to use their license number to complete the registration form. Otherwise, they may use a state ID card number or last four digits of their Social Security number.

Third on the list, voters should know that a photo ID is not required for voters to receive a ballot.

“The state’s voter photo ID law is currently on hold in the courts,” Kennedy said. “Registered voters are still required to sign their name on the poll list, in addition to providing their name and address, to receive a ballot.”

Fourth, voters should know what to do if they witness problems at the polling place.

“If you see voter fraud, voter intimidation, electioneering or misconduct by election officials, your first point of contact should be the Chief Election Inspector at the polling place,” said Elections Division Administrator Nat Robinson. “Most concerns can be resolved then and there, but if that doesn’t work, contact your municipal clerk’s office or local law enforcement.”

Complaints or issues that are not resolved to the voter’s satisfaction should be reported to the G.A.B. Voters can go online and report problems at <http://gab.wi.gov/complaints>, or they can call 1-866-VOTE-WIS. Robinson noted that the G.A.B. will be open extended hours to assist voters by telephone and email on several days before and after the election. Phones will be answered from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Election Day. A full extended hours schedule is available at <http://gab.wi.gov/node/2615>.

The remaining Top 10 things a voter should know are:

- 5. Election observers must follow the rules:** Election observers are welcome at every polling place, but they must obey the instructions of the chief election inspector, and may not interact with voters. Only Wisconsin electors may challenge another voter’s eligibility, and there are specific criteria and limitations on challenges. Observers who disobey will be asked to leave, and may not observe at other polling places on Election Day. 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>
- 6. Time off to vote:** Under state law, a voter can request up to three hours of unpaid time off to vote on Election Day. However, the request for time off must be made in advance to give the employer time to adjust work schedules.
- 7. 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 remove or cover up political items, or to leave the polling place if they are judged to be electioneering or creating a disturbance.
- 8. 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.
- 9. Absentee ballots must be postmarked by Election Day:** If you had an absentee ballot mailed to you, it must be postmarked by Election Day and must be received in your municipal clerk’s office by 4 p.m. the Friday after the election in order to be counted..
- 10. No straight-party voting:** In 2011, the Legislature changed the law to eliminate straight-party voting in Wisconsin. That means voters can no longer make one mark on the ballot to cast votes for every candidate belonging to a particular party. Voters must vote for candidates for each office on the ballot separately.

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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.