

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Voter Turnout Estimated at 35 percent for April 3 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board is predicting up to 35 percent of the voting age population – or approximately 1.5 million – will turn out to vote in the Tuesday, April 3 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary.

“We expect turnout in this election to be similar to the February 2008 Presidential Preference Primary,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “The Republican presidential nomination is still very contested, just as the Democratic nomination was very contested when Wisconsin voted in 2008.”

Historically, the highest voter turnout in a Spring presidential primary since 1960 was 50.2 percent that year. Wisconsin’s 2011 voting age population is 4,352,762 people. Statistics on past voter turnout and current voter registration are available at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>.

The major draw for this spring election will be Republican Presidential Preference Primary, in which candidates will be vying for 42 delegates in a winner-take-all contest. There will be six Republicans on the ballot: Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Mitt Romney, Michele Bachmann, Ron Paul and Rick Santorum. Governor Huntsman and Representative Bachmann did not respond to the G.A.B.’s requests to remove their names from the ballot after they dropped out of the race. President Barack Obama is the only name on the Democratic primary ballot.

The Presidential Preference Primary coincides this year with Wisconsin’s nonpartisan Spring Election. Unlike last year, there are no statewide races for state officials. The only state office elections are in the four Wisconsin Court of Appeals districts and several circuit court districts. There will also be local races for county, municipal and school board offices.

“We encourage voters to make their opinions count at every level of government,” Kennedy added. “This election provides them an opportunity to influence who will be on the presidential ballot in November, and to choose their local officials.”

Wisconsin’s open primary system does not require voters to declare a party. However, presidential preference primary voters may only vote for a presidential candidate of one party.

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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.