

# Wisconsin Elections Commission

## State of Wisconsin

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## Turnout Estimated at 16 percent for August 9 Partisan Primary

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Elections Commission is predicting turnout of 16 percent of voting-age adults for the Partisan Primary Election on Tuesday, August 9, equating to 711,867 voters.

Wisconsin’s voters will choose among 344 candidates for federal and state offices. Some voters will also have primaries for county offices such as county clerk and treasurer, and there are eight local referendums.

“While there are some hotly-contested congressional and state legislative district races, statewide interest in the primary is not likely to be as high as 2012, when turnout was 19.45 percent due to a competitive Republican primary for U.S. Senate,” said Michael Haas, Wisconsin’s chief elections official.

This year, there is one statewide Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, but it has not attracted nearly as much attention the 2012 Republican primary did. There are primaries in all but two of Wisconsin’s eight congressional districts, and districts 1, 7 and 8 have primaries in both the Democratic and Republican parties. In the Wisconsin Legislature, there are primaries in four of the 16 state senate districts and 23 of the 99 assembly districts. There are also district attorney primaries in 13 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties.

To find out what’s on their ballots, voters should visit the MyVote Wisconsin website: <http://myvote.wi.gov>.

In-person absentee voting in municipal clerks’ offices started Monday and runs through Friday, August 5. Haas said that as of Wednesday, July 27, approximately 73,700 absentee ballots had been issued and approximately 40,500 absentee ballots had been returned.

Haas reminded voters that because this is a partisan primary, they can only vote for candidates from one party. “Confusion about crossover voting is one of the biggest issues poll workers face during partisan primaries,” Haas said.

Wisconsin’s open primary system does not require voters to declare a party, but a voter may indicate a party preference on the ballot. The reason for indicating a party preference on the ballot is that it ensures that votes for candidates of that party will be counted in the event the voter accidentally selects one or more candidates from another party. No record is kept of a voter’s party preference.

Wisconsin's 2016 voting-age population is 4,449,170 people. Some municipal clerks report turnout based on the number of registered voters, resulting in a higher calculation for voter turnout. Those percentages should not be confused with turnout of the voting-age population, which is the method used by the Elections Commission. Calculating turnout based on voting-age population ensures consistency across election cycles as well as states, and also produces a more meaningful result due to fluctuations in the number of registered voters which are unrelated to the population of eligible voters .

Historically, the highest voter turnout in a fall partisan primary since 1960 was 27.9 percent in September 1964. Turnout in 2014 was 14.46 percent of the voting-age population. Statistics on past voter turnout and current voter registration are available at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>.

Haas reminded voters that they will need to show an acceptable photo ID at the polls to receive a ballot. Most voters have the ID they need to vote, but those who do not can get a free state ID for voting purposes from the Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles. For more information about the voter ID law, visit [www.bringit.wi.gov](http://www.bringit.wi.gov) or call 1-866-VOTE-WIS (868-3947).

Haas cautioned that a recent federal court ruling regarding voter ID does not apply to the August 9 Partisan Primary.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.