

Wisconsin Elections Commission

State of Wisconsin

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor ▪ Madison, WI 53703 ▪ elections@wi.gov ▪ (608) 266-8005 ▪ <http://elections.wi.gov>

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Reid Magney, 608-267-7887

Important Information for Wisconsin's Overseas Voters

MADISON, WI – Wisconsin voters who are temporarily overseas have new options for absentee voting under terms of an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice (US-DOJ).

Wisconsin's temporary overseas voters may now receive their absentee ballots electronically – by email or fax – making it easier to vote when they are outside the country. They may now also use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

The agreement was reached in conjunction with a lawsuit filed June 21 by the US-DOJ, which will permit Wisconsin to offer its voters residing overseas temporarily all of the voting protections guaranteed by Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). This agreement was necessary because Wisconsin law differentiates between permanent and temporary overseas voters and as result, temporary overseas voters were not afforded certain UOCAVA protections.

UOCAVA protects the voting rights in elections for federal office of absent uniformed service members, their family members, and U.S. citizens residing outside the U.S. UOCAVA requires states to allow all UOCAVA voters to receive their absentee ballots by mail or electronically, at the voters' option. UOCAVA also requires states to allow all UOCAVA voters to use a federal write-in absentee ballot as a back-up measure for voting, if the voters have applied on time for an absentee ballot but have not received the ballot from their state. These protections extend to all overseas voters, regardless of whether the voter resides overseas indefinitely or temporarily.

To request an absentee ballot, Wisconsin overseas electors may contact their local municipal clerk's office or visit the My Vote Wisconsin website (<https://myvote.wi.gov>) and click the Vote Absentee link at the top of the page. Voters may choose whether to receive their ballot by email or fax.

The FWAB is available on the website of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (<http://www.fvap.gov>).

In the August 14, 2018 Partisan Primary, voters will choose major party nominees for Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, U.S. Senator, Representative in Congress, State Senator and State Representative. Voters in some counties may have primaries for Sheriff, Clerk of Circuit Court and Coroner, as well as local referenda.

The names of all federal and state candidates appearing on the ballot in the August 14 Partisan Primary are available on the Commission's website: <http://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/2018/fall>. See the document **Candidates on Ballot By Election for Partisan Primary (8-14-2018).pdf**.

Military and overseas electors with questions about the absentee voting process may contact the Commission by calling 608-261-2028, or 1-866-VOTE-WIS (toll-free), or by e-mailing elections@wi.gov.

More information about military and overseas voting is available on the Commission's website: <http://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/military-overseas>.

Under terms of a consent decree, approved June 20, 2018, by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin, the state of Wisconsin agreed to take certain steps to ensure temporary overseas voters are able to fully participate in the August 14 Partisan Primary. Under the consent decree, the state agreed to:

- Ensure that, in all future federal elections, including the federal elections on August 14 and November 6, 2018, all Wisconsin's UOCAVA voters, including those who are temporary overseas voters, (1) shall be afforded the option to receive their blank absentee ballots by mail or electronically, in accordance with 52 U.S.C. § 20302(a)(7); and (2) shall be permitted to use federal write-in absentee ballots to cast votes, in accordance with 52 U.S.C. § 20302(a)(3).
- Take such steps as are necessary to provide notice of the court's order to all Wisconsin election officials with responsibility for complying with UOCAVA.
- Communicate to voters who may be temporarily overseas that they may receive an absentee ballot electronically by email or fax, or may use the federal write-in absentee ballot, by sending a news release to international publications and websites explaining the new options.
- Revise any forms, instructions, and materials used by the Elections Commission or provided by the Elections Commission to Wisconsin local election officials to reflect the ability of temporary overseas voters to receive their blank absentee ballots by mail or electronically and to use the federal write-in absentee ballots to cast their votes.
- Take such actions as are necessary to assure that temporary overseas voters will receive all of the protections of UOCAVA in all future elections for federal office, including proposing state legislation that complies with the requirements of UOCAVA as to temporary overseas voters and taking any administrative actions needed to achieve such compliance.
- File a status report with the court no later than May 1, 2019.

A complete copy of the consent decree is available on the Commission's website: <http://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/military-overseas/temporary-overseas>.

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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.