

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Absentee Voting Update

MADISON, WI – More than 205,000 absentee ballots have been cast so far for the November 4 General Election, according to the Government Accountability Board.

Of the 205,269 ballots cast through Wednesday, October 29, there were 142,057 early votes cast in clerk’s offices and there were 63,212 cast by mail or other absentee voting methods. There were 24,629 absentee ballots issued that had not yet returned. “Ballots cast” means ballots completed and returned to the municipal clerk’s office. Those ballots are stored securely and then counted on Election Day at the polls or an alternate location.

“These are partial numbers,” cautioned Kevin J. Kennedy, Wisconsin’s chief election official. “Out of Wisconsin’s 1,852 municipal clerks, about 360 use the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) to track absentee ballots. However, those are the state’s larger municipalities, which cover 69 percent of Wisconsin’s voters.”

“We are often asked how these numbers compare to previous elections,” said Kennedy. “Unfortunately, there are no easy answers.”

Because of changes in election law moving the primary election date and changing the time period for in-person absentee voting in clerks’ offices, direct comparisons between these numbers and previous elections are difficult. Also, the number of clerks who track absentee ballots in SVRS has changed over time. Clerks tracked about 43 percent of absentee ballots in SVRS for the 2008 Presidential and General Election, compared to nearly 67 percent during the 2012 Gubernatorial Recall Election.

Here are some historical numbers of absentee ballots cast in recent elections:

Election Date	Total Voters	Turnout	Total Absentee Votes	Absentee Votes in Clerk’s Office
11/6/2012	3,080,628	70.4%	664,597	514,398
6/5/2012	2,516,371	57.8%	265,427	153,854
11/2/2010	2,185,017	49.7%	230,744	122,712
11/4/2008	2,996,869	69.2%	647,175	NA

Statistical reports filed by clerks in 2008 did not break outs of the number of absentee votes cast in-person in the clerk’s office.

Kennedy reminded voters that 5 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday, October 30) is the deadline for most voters to request an absentee ballot by mail. [There are later deadlines for military voters, hospitalized voters, and sequestered jurors.](#)

Other important reminders about the election:

- Early voting ends at 5 p.m. on Friday, October 31, or at the close of business, whichever is later, but no later than 7 p.m. Check your municipal clerk's office hours before going to your city, village or town hall to vote because hours for early voting will vary.
- Find your clerk's location and contact information at MyVote Wisconsin: <http://myvote.wi.gov>.
- While you're at MyVote Wisconsin, make sure your registration is current. If it is not, you can fill out a registration form online, print it, and bring it with you to the clerk's office to sign in front of the clerk.
- Consider waiting for Election Day. The lines may well be shorter, especially if you vote at off-peak times.

Elections Division Administrator Michael Haas reminded voters that the deadline for voters to mail absentee ballots back to the clerk is Election Day, November 4. Ballots must be postmarked by Election Day and received in the clerk's office by 4 p.m. Friday, November 7 to be counted.

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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. consists of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members.