

# Government Accountability Board

## State of Wisconsin

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## Top Ten Things Wisconsin Primary Voters Need to Know

MADISON, WI – The Government Accountability Board today released its list of the top 10 things Wisconsin voters should know for the Partisan Primary on Tuesday, August 12, 2014.

**The number one** thing voters should know is that they must bring an acceptable proof of residence document if they plan to register at the polling place on Election Day, including updating their name or address.

“Election Day registration ensures that everyone who is qualified to vote will get to vote,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “However, you will need to bring a proof of residence document with you if you want to register on Election Day.”

To register on Election Day, Wisconsin voters must provide proof of residence, which includes a current utility bill, lease, university ID card or other official document showing the voter’s name and current address. A list of acceptable documents is available at <http://gab.wi.gov>. Before Election Day, you must have lived at your current address for at least 28 days to be eligible to vote, but the proof of residence document does not need to be 28 days old. Voters who have a current, valid Wisconsin driver license or Wisconsin state ID card will be required to use their license or ID number to complete the registration form. Otherwise, they may use the last four digits of their Social Security number.

You can also register to vote before Election Day. Registration in your municipal clerk’s office takes place until 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election (August 8, 2014). Remember, you will still need to bring your proof of residence document to register.

Voters who may not be sure whether their registration is current can check their status with their municipal clerk, or on the state’s MyVote Wisconsin website <https://myvote.wi.gov>. My Vote Wisconsin is also a great resource to find your municipal clerk’s contact information, and your polling place.

**Number two** on the list is that voters may only vote for candidates of one party in the partisan primary.

Some voters think that they can vote for any candidate in a primary election, but this has not been the case since 1905, when Wisconsin went to a system of partisan primaries. “Unlike the November General Election, the Partisan Primary in August is for voters to nominate who they would like to move on to the November election,” said Kennedy. “But the law says voters can only participate in one party’s primary.”

Elections Division Administrator Michael Hass reminds voters that if your municipality has electronic voting equipment, it is programmed to reject ballots with crossover votes. “If you make a mistake and vote in multiple parties, ask a poll worker for a new ballot. You may do this up to three times,” Haas said.

**Number three** is that voters do not have to show a photo ID to receive a primary ballot on August 12.

Even though the Wisconsin Supreme Court recently ruled that the state’s Voter Photo ID Law is constitutional, there is a separate federal court order blocking it. Any Wisconsin election official who requests a photo ID from a voter in order to receive a ballot would violate that federal court order.

Wisconsin’s Attorney General has announced that he plans to seek reinstatement of Voter Photo ID in a federal appeals court, but such a reversal is extremely unlikely for the August 12 Partisan Primary, Kennedy said.

“If the federal court order blocking the Voter Photo ID Law is overturned before the November 4 General Election, the G.A.B. will notify the public and local election officials,” Kennedy said.

For more information about the current state of the Voter Photo ID Law, visit the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/photo-id>.

The remainder of the Top 10 things voters should know are:

**4. You can still vote by absentee ballot.** All registered, eligible voters can receive an absentee ballot by mail or in their municipal clerk’s office. You may vote an absentee ballot in your clerk’s office between the third Monday and the last Friday before an election (July 21 - August 8, 2014). Hours vary by municipality. Contact your municipal clerk for the times and location of absentee voting. Please note that due to a recent legislative change you may no longer vote an absentee ballot in the clerk’s office on weekends.

You can also request a ballot by mail. All requests must be received by your municipal clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the election (August 7, 2014). To find your municipal clerk’s contact information and an absentee ballot request form please visit <https://myvote.wi.gov>.

**5. 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 (August 15, 2014).

**6. What to do about 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 Kennedy. “The chief inspector is the lead poll worker and can usually resolve most polling place issues. But if that doesn’t work, you can 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.

**7. 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. 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/publications/rules/gab004>

**8. 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 leave the polling place if they are judged to be electioneering or creating a disturbance.

**9. Don't take a picture of your ballot:** Some voters want to share pictures of their ballot with friends on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or other photo sharing apps. But under Wisconsin law it is illegal to show your marked ballot to another person, which is what you would be doing if you took a picture and shared it online.

**10. Consider becoming a poll worker:** Many Wisconsin cities, villages and towns need more civic-minded people to help out on Election Day. When you go to vote, take a look around see if it is something you would like to do. Many places offer split shifts if you can't work the entire day. Contact your local municipal clerk's office for more information.

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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.