

**Testimony of Michael Haas
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Wisconsin Government Accountability Board**

Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections

January 23, 2014

Room 412 East, State Capitol

Public Hearing

Assembly Bills 603 and 606

Senate Bills 264, 265 and 267

Chairperson Bernier and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the many bills before you today. I am appearing here for information purposes and to answer any questions you or Committee members may have. The Government Accountability Board is not taking a position for or against any of these bills.

Assembly Bill 603

Assembly Bill 603 requires all electors registering to vote to provide proof of residence when submitting a voter registration form. This creates some very practical issues because of the many different ways in which voters submit voter registration forms. If an individual submits a registration form as part of a voter registration drive, to whom do they provide the identifying document establishing proof of residence? The form will be completed outside the municipal clerk's office. The voter cannot surrender their identifying document to the person collecting the registration form. There is no provision for submitting a copy of the identifying document to be given to the municipal clerk.

Even more disconcerting is the fact an identifying document contains very personal information. Dates of birth, driver license numbers and account numbers offer the unscrupulous individual the opportunity to steal an elector's identity as part of the registration process. Individuals conducting voter registration drives already present challenges to the efficient registration of voters because forms are not legible, forms are submitted in mass and at the last minute.

This same problem exists when voters register at public locations outside the municipal clerk's office such as libraries and senior centers. There is no provision in the bill to require a voter who completes a registration form outside the clerk's office to deliver the

required proof of residence at a later date. Even if this option is provided, it makes voter registration outside the clerk's office highly impractical.

Under current law these voters are sent a confirmation mailing. If it comes back undeliverable, the voter's registration is inactivated. The G.A.B. sends these forms on a weekly basis. The Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) administered by the G.A.B. has a number of checks that have to be met as part of activating a voter registration including matches against the DMV database, death records and felon records.

Assembly Bill 606

Assembly Bill 606 reduces the number of nomination paper signatures required for a candidate for city-wide office. Instead of gathering a minimum of 200 signatures with a maximum of 400 permitted, candidates for city-wide office will need a minimum of 100 signatures with a maximum of 200 signatures permitted. The G.A.B. has no comment on this legislation, but we can answer any questions Committee Members may have.

Senate Bill 264 and Senate Bill 265

Senate Bill 264 would require that only the chief inspector and one other inspector whose party affiliation is different than the chief inspector's party affiliation may secure the ballot container. Senate Bill 265 provides that whenever two or more inspectors are required to perform a function within a polling place and both parties that are entitled to submit nominees have done so, the chief inspector must assign, insofar as practicable, an equal number of inspectors from the nominees of each party.

The G.A.B. staff has undertaken a survey of Wisconsin municipal clerks to ascertain what proportion of clerks received election worker nominations from each party. We have enclosed a copy of these survey results with this testimony.

We believe the proportion of clerks receiving poll worker nominations is rather small. In the event a clerk does receive nominations from both parties, it is unlikely that poll workers from both parties will be available at most polling places. We are concerned about the practicality of training poll workers in procedures that will apply in so few situations.

Senate Bill 267

Senate Bill 267 as amended by Senate Amendment 2 requires poll workers to record on the poll list the type of identifying document provided by a voter to establish proof of residence along with the name of the entity or institution that issued the identifying document. It also eliminates the requirement that any applicable unique number on identifying documents establishing type of proof of residence be recorded on a supplemental voter list. Instead, this information would be recorded on the voter registration form. This facilitates having the supplemental voter lists open to public inspection without any need to redact sensitive information. The supplemental voter lists will contain the voter's name, address, voter number, and type of proof of residence

document along with the name of the entity or institution that issued the identifying document, but not any unique number.

Supplemental voter lists are created for:

- New Wisconsin residents (Presidential-only voters (§6.15))
- Late registrants (in the clerk’s office after close of registration, 20 days before election (§6.29)), and
- Election Day registrants (new voter, name change or address change (§6.55)).

Under the legislation, municipal clerks would be required to enter the type of identifying document provided to establish proof of residence in the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS). SVRS already has the capability to record the type of proof-of-residence document, and it is used. The proposed requirement to list these changes on registration or application forms is practical. Requiring that SVRS list the type of proof-of-residence document ensures that the data will be entered into SVRS by local municipal clerks. While we were not able to assemble information about proof of residence for Presidential-only voters and late registrants, we do have information for Election Day registrants:

Proof of Residence Source	Total	Percent
WI Driver License or ID Card	470,835	65%
Utility Bill	84,109	12%
Other Document	63,233	9%
No Information Available	31,030	4%
Bank Statement	28,681	4%
Residential Lease	18,227	3%
Paycheck	15,765	2%
College Student ID	7,979	1%
Government ID Card	3,423	0%
Tax Bill	2,500	0%
Employment ID Card	274	0%
Affidavit for Homeless Electors	102	0%

An amendment has been offered to limit the number of digits of any unique number associated with a proof of residence document that is recorded on the voter registration form. While this will provide a measure of privacy for the voter and eliminate the need to redact the number in response to open records requests, it will also create training challenges for poll workers.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I hope this testimony will help inform the Legislature’s consideration of these bills. As always, we are available to answer questions and work with you in developing proposed legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

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