

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor ▪ Madison, WI 53703 ▪ gab@wi.gov ▪ (608) 266-8005 ▪ Help Desk (608) 261-2028 ▪ <http://gab.wi.gov>

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

No Photo ID Required at April Election

MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin voters will not be required to show a photo ID to vote at the April 7, 2015 Spring Election.

The U.S. Supreme Court today cleared the way for enforcement of Wisconsin’s 2011 voter ID law, but because the Spring Election is two weeks away, the Attorney General has advised state election officials not to implement it at the April 7 election.

“Absentee ballots are already in the hands of voters, therefore, the law cannot be implemented for the April 7 election,” Attorney General Brad Schimel stated today. “The Voter ID law will be in place for future elections – this decision is final.” The Wisconsin Department of Justice represented the Government Accountability Board in defending the voter ID law.

Kevin Kennedy, Wisconsin’s chief election official, said the G.A.B. anticipates there will be special elections in 2015 at which photo ID will be required. The next statewide election at which photo ID will be required is the Spring Primary on February 16, 2016.

On March 23, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of an earlier Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals decision which had reinstated the photo ID law. The law had been enjoined by the courts since March, 2012.

Even though voters will not have to show an ID to receive a ballot at this election, voters who are registering now in the municipal clerk’s office or at the polling place on Election Day should be aware that they may use their driver license or state ID card to establish their residence if it contains a current address.

“You may use a valid driver license or state ID card for proof of residence when you register to vote, either before or on Election Day” said Kennedy. “But you are not required to show a photo ID to get your ballot.”

Photo ID requirements are different than proof of residence requirements. All voters must show proof of residence to register to vote, and a driver license or state ID card with a current address are just two of many documents can use to prove they are residents. A full list is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/voter-guides/proof-of-residence>.

Also, voters who have a Wisconsin driver license or state ID card are required to provide the card number on the voter registration form. Voters who do not have a driver license or state ID card can use the last four digits of their Social Security number instead.

The G.A.B. advises anyone who does not have a state ID card to take advantage of the opportunity to get one for free. The Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles has a process to allow people to obtain a free State ID card for voting purposes, even if the person does not have a birth certificate.

Kennedy said that process can take time, especially for people born outside of Wisconsin, so it makes sense to get started early. More information is available at the Wisconsin DMV website: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/drivers/apply/petition-process.htm>.

Voters are also encouraged to visit the Wisconsin Government Accountability's voter services website, MyVote.wi.gov, for information about voting.

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The Government Accountability Board is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The board is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members.