

State of Wisconsin \ Elections Board

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Executive Director

DATE: Friday, April 29, 2005

TO: Members of the Legislative Council Special Committee
on Election Law Review

FROM: Kevin J. Kennedy, Executive Director
Wisconsin State Elections Board

SUBJECT: Vote by Mail Survey and Results

The staff of the Wisconsin State Elections Board executed the "Vote by Mail" Survey from March 29, 2005 to April 11, 2005. The survey was sent to municipal clerks electronically using the Municipal Clerks Listserv. Additionally, the staff contacted all county clerks electronically, requesting assistance in administering the survey to municipal clerks who had not responded before election night (April 5, 2005).

As of April 13, 2005, the Elections Board received 590 completed surveys either by fax, phone conversation or through Zoomerang (an on-line survey).

Provided Attachments:

Attachment A: Survey on Vote by Mail

Attachment B: Cross Tabulation of Results

Attachment C: Question 8: Would you support implementing "Vote by Mail" for all municipalities?

Yes - 113 (11 comments)

No - 477 (47 comments)

Attachment D: Question 9: If municipalities are given the choice, would you implement "Vote by Mail" in your municipality?

Yes - 122 (random selection of 15)

No - 468 (random selection of 15)

Comments have been edited for spelling and clarity. Further results (including comments) are available upon request.

For further information contact Kevin J. Kennedy at (608) 266-8087 or Faith Edgren (608) 266-2094.

ATTACHMENT A

Survey on "Vote by Mail"

Survey on Vote by Mail

The Legislative Council Special Committee on Election Law Review has been considering a variety of policies and procedures. One of the procedures which has been **proposed** is to allow municipalities the option to go to elections which are conducted exclusively through the mail. The proposed procedures for a "vote by mail" election are outlined below as well as some of the positive and negative aspects of such an election. After reviewing this proposal, please take a few minutes to answer the following survey questions and comment on this proposal. Your answers will be reviewed by the Committee as they research this issue.

Please complete the survey online at:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB2248PV2VUTK>

Please complete the survey by Monday, April 11, 2005.

Vote by Mail Election Procedures

The new statewide voter registration system will allow labels of eligible voters in a municipality to be printed.

1. 30 days before an election, the clerk mails a ballot to each registered voter in his or her municipality. The ballot will be enclosed in the same certificate envelope used for absentee ballots. The clerk pays the postage for the ballot to be sent, but not the return postage.
2. Voters either return their completed ballots to secure ballot drop off points in a municipality, such as a clerk's office or a library, or they mail their completed ballot back to the clerk. Voters may also come into the clerk's office to register and receive a ballot.
3. On election day, at a designated location, electors may still drop off their completed ballots. Poll workers process the ballots during the day (i.e., checking that the certificate envelope has the required signatures, opening the ballot and placing it in the ballot box or machine).
4. After 8:00 p.m., the ballots are counted. In municipalities with paper ballots, the ballots are hand counted. In municipalities with machines, the tapes are run, and the write-in votes are tallied.

Items in Discussion

The proposed procedures below have not been finalized, but will be addressed if vote by mail elections are implemented.

- Individuals who are on vacation and need to have their ballot sent to an address outside of the municipality.
- If permitted, voting on election day, where and how it would take place.

Positive Aspects

- Increased voter turn out
- Small municipalities can save money by not having to hire poll workers for the entire day.
- The HAVA (Help America Vote Act) requirement for an accessible polling place and accessible voting equipment will be waived.

Negative Aspects

- Some community members enjoy the opportunity election day provides to meet people within their community.
- Issues arising when a voter changes their mind after they have returned their ballot.

Please contact Faith Edgren (608-266-2094, faith.edgren@seb.state.wi.us) or Sutton Meagher (608-266-3061, sutton.meagher@seb.state.wi.us) with any questions you may have.

Voting by Mail

1

Municipality:

2

County:

3

HINDI Number: (Your HINDI number can be found at <http://elections.state.wi.us> under Clerks Corner.)

4

Name of person completing survey:

5

Position:

6

Phone Number:

7

What is the estimated population of your municipality?

Less than 1,000

- 1,000-5,000
- 5,001-10,000
- 10,001-39,000
- 39,001-150,000
- More than 150,001



8

Would you support implementing "Vote by Mail" for all municipalities?

Why or why not



9

If municipalities are given the choice, would you implement "Vote by Mail" in your municipality?

Why or why not



10

In your municipality, what are the largest problems/challenges you foresee with the "Vote by Mail" proposal?



11

Any other comments which you believe the Committee should consider? An appropriate answer can be 'none' or 'N/A'.



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ATTACHMENT B

Cross Tabulation of Results

