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☞ Details: Public Hearing: Audit Report 07-16: An Evaluation: Compliance with Election Laws, Elections Board

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

(session year)

Joint

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Audit...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

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JUDGE DAVID DEININGER
Chair

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

March 31, 2008

The Honorable Senator James Sullivan, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-Chair
Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Committee on Audit
Wisconsin State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Senator Sullivan and Representative Jeskewitz,

It is my pleasure to provide a progress report on issues identified in the Legislative Audit Bureau's (LAB) November 2007, Report (Report 07-16), on state and local governments' compliance with election laws ("An Evaluation: Compliance with Election Laws"). The LAB recommended that the Government Accountability Board update the Joint Legislative Audit Committee on the following four issues by March 31, 2008:

- 1) Data Matches;
- 2) Address Verification Cards;
- 3) Concerns with the Statewide Voter Registration System; and,
- 4) Promulgation of Administrative Rules.

Although the LAB did not recommend that we update you on polling place accessibility, given the broad interests expressed by your Committee and other members of the Legislature, the Government Accountability Board, the media, concerned citizens, and the disability community, we felt an update on this issue was important enough to include in this status report.

Our progress report is attached. We thank you and your fellow Committee members for the opportunity to share this information with you. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin J. Kennedy".

Kevin J. Kennedy
Director and General Counsel
Government Accountability Board

Attachment

cc: Members, Government Accountability Board
Nathaniel E. Robinson, Elections Division Administrator

WISCONSIN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Update on Select Issues in the Legislative Audit Bureau's November 2007, Report Report 07-16, on state and local governments' compliance with election laws, "An Evaluation: Compliance with Election Laws."

The LAB recommended that the Government Accountability Board update the Joint Legislative Audit Committee on the following four issues by March 31, 2008:

- 1) Data Matches;
- 2) Address Verification Cards;
- 3) Concerns with the Statewide Voter Registration System;
- 4) Promulgation of Administrative Rules; and
- 5) Polling Place Accessibility.*

* Although the LAB did not recommend that we update you on polling place accessibility, given the broad interests expressed by your Committee and other members of the Legislature, the Government Accountability Board, the media, concerned citizens, and the disability community, we felt an update on this issue was important enough to include in this status report.

Program Update

This response was prepared by the Government Accountability Board staff, under the direction of its Director and General Counsel, and does not represent a formal position taken by the Board or its members.

Data Matches

LAB Recommendation: That either the Elections Board or the Government Accountability Board report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by March 31, 2008, on the status of efforts to match data in the Statewide Voter Registration System with data maintained by the departments of Corrections, Health and Family Services, and Transportation, and to train clerks in how to use information obtained from the data matches.

Status: The data interfaces for the State Voter Registration System (SVRS) required by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) are now installed upgrades and are currently being tested and expected to given to clerks by summer. Interfaces are required with the Department of Transportation/Division of Motor Vehicles for validation of voter identification information, Department of Correction for felon information, and Department of Health and Family Services for death information.

To meet the Interface requirement, during Janaury and February (the transition period with our former contractor, Accenture), Accenture provided resolutions for defects in the SVRS application and fulfilled requests from Government Accountability Board (GAB) for changes to the application to make the application more useable for clerk users. These resolutions and changes to the application are currently being tested by GAB staff in preparation for moving the functionality to production for use by clerks.

Our SVRS Team continues the planning and testing process for implementing the HAVA required Interfaces. Several new code patches are currently being tested. SVRS 6.4 Patch 2 fixes the felon matching so that when a new voter is registered, that voter is automatically compared against a list of existing felons. This patch has been successfully tested and is awaiting implementation in Production. SVRS 6.4 Patch 3 provides a new functionality so that when a death is confirmed or a felon is matched, it makes the voter record inactive and therefore, will not appear on the poll book. This fix is still in the testing process, but the results thus far are promising. SVRS 6.4 Patch 4 includes two new reports to help local election officials manage the Interface business processes. During testing, a minor issue was discovered with this patch, for which the Team has prepared a fix.

DET plans to improve the infrastructure used to transfer files between the state agencies to facilitate the information transfer. These new updates are scheduled to be tested in April 2008, and when successful, will be implemented along with Interface patches described above.

Testing the Interface components is proceeding as planned, and the Interfaces are expected to become operational after the spring election cycle, in late Spring 2008, well before the September 9 Partisan Primary and the November 4 General Election.

As for clerk training preparedness, the Government Accountability Board (GAB) is aggressively preparing for on-line training of local election officials across Wisconsin, and will be prepared to make electronic training opportunities available when the Interfaces are ready. Clerks will learn to process data matches independently, right from their own offices. They will also be able to consult with GAB staff for additional assistance.

Address Verification Cards

LAB Recommendation: That either the Elections Board or the Government Accountability Board report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by March 31, 2008, on whether it believes the 30-day statutory deadline for entering into the Statewide Voter Registration System all information obtained on Election Day should be extended.

Status: As we stated in our November 19, 2007, response to Ms. Janice Mueller, State Auditor, the challenges for local election officials in entering post-election information pre-date the existence of the SVRS. Larger municipalities, such as the cities of Milwaukee and Madison often have been tested by their post-election responsibilities due to the volume of voter participation. However, entry of Election Day registrations and scanning of poll books to update voter records must occur before the next election so that proper cross-checking of voter records can take place in the interim.

Different election cycles present different time challenges for the proper preparation of poll books. Only lengthening the period between the primary and the general election would provide clerks sufficient preparation time. We believe the 30-day statutory deadline for entering new registrations into the Statewide Voter Registration System for all information obtained on Election Day should be extended, and as such, we propose the following schedule:

For the February Election: We propose 30 calendar days for entering data into the SVRS following the election.

For the April Election: We propose 40 business days for entering data into the SVRS following the election.

For the September Election: We propose 30 calendar days for entering data into the SVRS following the election.

For the November Election: We propose 40 business days for entering data into the SVRS following the election.

Concerns with the Statewide Voter Registration System

LAB Recommendation: That either the Elections Board or the Government Accountability Board report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by March 31, 2008, on the status of efforts to improve processing times and enable the Statewide Voter Registration System to process absentee ballots and suspend voter registrations.

Status: While processing and computer response time is improving during non-election periods, additional improvements need to be made. We noted that the Department of Administration's Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) completed some hardware changes in the SVRS production environment in an attempt to help improve performance of the application during the busy election period. DET plans further hardware changes after the April election.

Since Accenture's departure on February 28, 2008, we have done the following to keep the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) functional:

- Hired short-term staff with high level computer expertise.
- A critical piece of third-party software has been successfully acquired and installed.
- Two additional critical components of SVRS documentation were successfully negotiated and obtained in the test environment, and the Source Code Library necessary to perform the migrations of the SVRS Source Code into the GAB/DOA's Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) environment.
- DET performed some initial hardware changes in the SVRS production environment to help improve performance of the application during the busy election period. Additional updates are being planned.

Additionally, GAB plans to implement a new version of the SVRS software, including upgrading the underlying server software, along with the Interface implementation. We believe that when the aforementioned changes are successfully complete and become fully functional, online performance will improve.

Before the sunset of the GAB's contract with Accenture, Accenture provided several fixes to the absentee ballot functionality. These fixes will be evaluated after the Interfaces are fully operational, as HAVA compliance has been GAB's highest priority. However, as previously reported, some prior fixes have improved the use of the absentee functionality, and additional municipalities took advantage of this functionality for the Spring Elections.

Pertaining to the suspension of voters, the SVRS currently does not automatically generate a suspension notification letter, which is necessary before local election officials can use the automated functionality. We will address the problem. Statutorily, the next time the purge process is required will be after the November 4, 2008 election. This allows the newly acquired GAB technical staff time to investigate and potentially fix the defect in time for the next purge.

Promulgation of Administrative Rules

LAB Recommendation: That either the Elections Board or the Government Accountability Board report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by March 31, 2008, on progress in promulgating administrative rules that are required by statutes and that we recommended in our 2005 evaluation, including rules that:

- Describe training requirements for municipal clerks, special registration deputies, and other local election officials; and,
- Clarify the responsibilities of local election officials in registering voters.

Status: Staff has addressed **Municipal Clerk** and other **Local Election Officials** training and certification requirements, including qualification, training content, certification renewal, etc., in a new set of administrative rules that has been approved by the Board, and forwarded to the Legislative Reference Bureau for promulgation pursuant the 30-day notice procedure under s.277.16(2)(e), Stats.

Regarding training for **Special Registration Deputies** (SRDs), the Legislature completed its review of the administrative rules on training special registration deputies and it became effective on February 1, 2008. Since that time, training materials (curriculum and forms pertaining to the training) have been finalized and pre-tested with GAB staff during staff members' training. Additionally, 4 classes have been conducted and 51 statewide SRDs have been trained, as follows:

- February 16, 2008: Milwaukee, 25 SRDs trained.
- February 20, 2008: Madison, 0 SRDs trained.
- February 27, 2008: Fitchburg, 5 SRDs trained.
- March 5, 2008: Madison, 21 SRDs trained.

We are working with the Wisconsin League of Women Voters to conduct classes at their summer convention in June. Additionally, we will convene training for the UW United Council, a University of Wisconsin student organization on April 12 and 13, 2008, and we are in the process of collaborating with the Department of Public Instruction and Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs) on identifying high schools and other educational institutions that will be considered for holding classes. We are continually publicizing the availability of SRD classes and expect requests for training to increase in the coming months.

Regarding administrative rules relating to **Voter Registration** and the responsibility of municipal clerks and other **Local Election Officials**, GAB staff has completed a draft that is undergoing an internal review. This draft is comprehensive and covers statewide voter registration system data entry; data quality; voter information updates and revisions; ineligible voter lists; death lists; voter registration deputies; revision of registration list; provisional ballots; post election registration list audits; address verification postcards; registration in office of the county clerks; transferring registration; annexation and redistricting procedures within the SVRS system.

This proposed set of rules will be presented to the Government Accountability Board (GAB) at their May 5, 2008, meeting. Following GAB's disposition, the rule will be forwarded to the Legislative Reference Bureau for promulgation pursuant the 30-day notice procedure under s.277.16(2)(e), Stats.

Polling Place Accessibility

LAB Recommendation: That the Elections Board and, after it is replaced, the Government Accountability Board:

- Modify the accessibility survey so that municipalities must wherever possible indicate affirmatively or negatively whether a polling place complies with accessibility requirements;
- Require municipalities to complete the modified accessibility survey for each polling place that will be used in November 2008; and
- Take steps to verify the accuracy of the completed accessibility surveys, such as annually visiting a sample of polling places.

Status: Since receiving the November 2007 LAB Report, a great deal of attention has been focused on complying with this recommendation. Working with our advisors (representatives from the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Disability Rights Wisconsin and Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities), the re-tooling of the accessibility survey has been completed, pre-tested during the February 19 Presidential Preference Primary and is currently being revised based on staff's and the City of Madison's feedback.

The revised draft accessibility survey will undergo a final pre-test during Tuesday's April 1 primary. Following reviewing those results, with continuing assistance from our accessibility advisors, the instrument will be finalized and afterwards, distributed to our 1,851 municipal, 72 county clerks, and to the City of Milwaukee Election Commission and the County of Milwaukee Election Commission, use in the September 9 primary.

It should be noted that even though our accessibility advisors work with the disability community on a daily basis; however, assisting us to ensure a clear, concise and meaningful questionnaire for collecting useful data on polling place accessibility in order for a determination to be made regarding compliance, is more of a challenge than originally anticipated.

In response to concerns expressed by your Committee and other members of the Legislature, the Government Accountability Board, the media, concerned citizens, and the disability community, we responded as follows:

- 20 counties were visited, including a total of 49 polling locations in 29 municipalities (17 cities, 7 villages, and 5 towns).
- 14 staff members participated in site visits; 12 conducted reviews, one served as a poll worker, and one observed polling places in Milwaukee and Kenosha.
- GAB staff members attended a required training session before going out on Election Day. All had the necessary supplies to assess and monitor compliance such as levels, tape measures, door pressure gauges, and cameras to document both good and bad examples of accessibility. Staffers used the draft revised survey to conduct the on-site compliance reviews.

- The 36 polling locations that the LAB reviewed in November 2006, regardless of whether the LAB had identified the location as having a compliance issue, were visited on February 19. The other 13 locations were either chosen randomly from the list of surveys reviewed by LAB or selected for review based on concerns from citizens. A few of the former polling locations were no longer available, so the new polling venues were assessed for complying with GAB's accessibility requirements.

Our report summarizing the polling place accessibility evaluations that the GAB staff conducted on February 19 is attached. As can be seen by reviewing this summary, too many of the barriers first identified by the LAB remain unresolved. We are working with these municipalities to correct deficiencies before the September and November elections. We have the ability to provide limited financial assistance for those municipalities that demonstrate the greatest need. If our persuasion ability fails, we will resort to our authority to issue compliance orders and commence enforcement actions against non-compliant municipalities.

We should note that many of our 2,822 polling places are not under the direct control of municipalities. Many consist of faith-based buildings, schools and non-governmental venues. In some of our rural and small communities, there are limited options for considering polling site alternatives. These constraints and realities must be taken into consideration and balances with enforcement actions.

On Tuesday, April 1, GAB staff will once again go onsite to conduct additional accessibility compliance assessments. On Thursday, March 27, 2008, GAB staff received a refresher orientation training in preparation for conducting additional onsite accessibility compliance. One of our accessibility advisors participated in the orientation for the purpose of answering questions and providing guidance.

On April 1, as for the February 19 Presidential Preference Primary assessments, GAB staff will have the necessary tools to monitor compliance, including levels, tape measures, door pressure gauges, and cameras to document both good and bad examples of accessibility. They will be using the second draft of the new accessibility survey to conduct the evaluations.

Summary information:

- 13 staff members will be out conducting polling place accessibility evaluations.
- Our goal is to reach a total of 64 polling locations in 36 counties.
- The list includes 22 cities, 16 villages, and 18 towns.
- Plans are for our staff to cover the entire state from La Crosse and Manitowoc counties on the east and west, to Bayfield and Rock counties in the north and south.

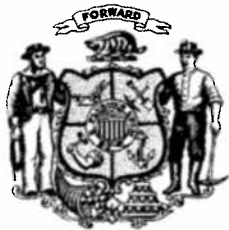
Rationale for Selecting Municipalities/Polling Places:

- We have received some kind of complaint/concern from the community.
- The LAB reviewed the polling place survey in 2006 and mentioned it on their report. For example, a municipality that had checked the "not applicable" box repeatedly, or had answered related questions in different ways, making their answers seem inconsistent.
- Randomly chosen.

As recommended by the LAB, we will conduct onsite compliance assessments, and continue to work with our advisors to identify strategies for monitoring a measurable number of municipalities and polling places during the September and November elections.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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JUDGE DAVID DEININGER
Chair

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

March 31, 2008

The Honorable Mark Miller, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 409 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

The Honorable Kitty Rhoades, Assembly Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 309 East, State Capitol
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53707-8953

Dear Senator Miller and Representative Rhoades:

In accordance with your request, I am pleased to provide you and your committee members with our monthly update of the status of the Wisconsin Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS). This information brings you up-to-date through March of 2008, about how we are meeting SVRS benchmarks, status of SVRS contracts, and communication with Federal government representatives regarding the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) compliance.

SVRS Benchmarks

System Upgrade(s)

GAB staff is still planning the implementation of SVRS version 6.4. Recently, two additional components of SVRS documentation were obtained from the former vendor, Accenture. Build scripts and a source code library, both necessary to prepare and install the SVRS source code in a test environment, were received.

An updated chart of SVRS patches/upgrades is included with this letter, as Attachment #1.

Data Interfaces

The data interfaces which will connect the SVRS with data from the departments of Corrections, Health and Family Services, and Transportation should be activated in late May or early June. In the meantime, the Elections Division continues to distribute Department of Corrections (felon records) and Department of Health and Family Services (death records) data through paper lists to local clerks, prepared by the Division of Enterprise Technology. Clerks received those lists on March 7 in order to correct poll books for the April 1 election.

Personnel

Two temporary IS contract consultants have been hired through August to assist Elections Division staff with repairs to the SVRS system. Another LTE IS position also has been hired. Finally, the Elections Division is in the process of hiring three Project positions to assist with continued improvements to the SVRS.

Other SVRS-related Work

- A critical piece of third party software (Dev Express) was successfully installed
- The Division of Enterprise Technology changed some hardware in the SVRS Production Environment to improve performance of the application during the busy election period, and more changes are being planned

Contracts

No payments on contracts with external vendors pertaining to the SVRS project were made in March.

Federal Communication

There was no communication in March with the U.S. Department of Justice about the SVRS.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Kennedy
Director and General Counsel
Government Accountability Board

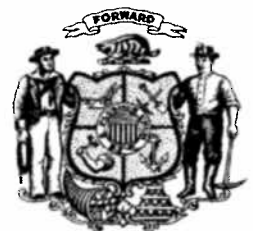
cc: Co-Chairs, Joint Legislative Committee on Audit
Senator Spencer Coggs
Representative Sheryl Albers
Secretary Michael Morgan, Department of Administration
Robert Lang, Legislative Fiscal Bureau Director
Cynthia Dombrowski, State Budget Office Analyst
Vicki Holten, Legislative Fiscal Bureau
Nathaniel E. Robinson, Elections Division Administrator
Barbara A. Hansen, SVRS Project Director

Attachment #1: SVRS Upgrades

Item	Description	Date Delivered	Date Testing Began	Date in Production	Comments
SVRS 6.3 Patch 2	This patch fixes a time-out error that occurred when searching for death matches (part of the HAVA-required Interfaces)	1/8/08	1/18/08	after April election	Testing successful. Will be put into Production along with the HAVA Interfaces.
SVRS 6.4	This is the latest code release of the SVRS application, upgraded the database and operating system to SQL 2005.	10/26/07	1/4/08	after April election	Currently being tested.
SVRS 6.4 Patch 1	This patch fixes defects in several reports, including the DMV ping letter (part of the HAVA-required Interfaces).	1/18/08	1/22/08	after April election	Currently being tested.
SVRS 6.4 Patch 2	This patch fixes the felon matching so that when a new voter is registered, they are compared against a list of existing felons (part of the HAVA-required Interfaces).	1/23/08	1/28/08	after April election	Testing successful. Will be put into Production after AESM version 6.4.
SVRS 6.4 Patch 3	This patch provides a new functionality so that when you confirm a death or felon match, it makes the voter inactive (part of the HAVA-required Interfaces).	2/1/08	2/6/08	after April election	Currently being tested.
SVRS 6.4 Patch 4	This patch provides 2 new reports (Part of the HAVA-required Interfaces).	2/8/08	2/14/08	after April election	Currently being tested.
SVRS 6.4 Patch 5	This patch fixes the polling place displayed in Voter Public Access	2/21/08	2/25/08	3/12/08	Testing Successful. Fully Implemented
SVRS 6.4 Patch 6	This patch fixes the timing for Election Day information in Voter Public Access	2/26/08	3/11/08	3/13/08	Testing Successful. Fully Implemented.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



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JUDGE DAVID DEININGER
Chair

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

DATE: April 9, 2008

TO: Mr. Matthew Swentkofske
Office of Senator Jim Sullivan, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Audit
State Capitol, Room 118 South

Ms. Pam Matthews
Office of Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Audit
State Capitol, Room 314 North

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson, Elections Division Administrator
Wisconsin Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: SVRS Expenditures Summary for March 2008

Mr. Matthew Swentkofske and Ms. Pam Matthews, on behalf of Mr. Kevin J. Kennedy, our Director and General Counsel, I am pleased to submit twelve copies (6 for each Committee on Audit Co-Chair) of the Government Accountability Board's SVRS Expenditures Summary for the month of March 2008.

Please let me know if we can provide additional information or assistance. I may be contacted at 608 267 0715, or at Nat.Robinson@wi.gov. Thank you!

cc: Kevin J. Kennedy
Director and General Counsel
Government Accountability Board

Ms. Sharrie Hauge
Special Assistant to the Director and General Counsel
Government Accountability Board

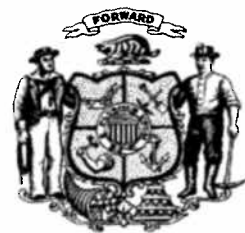
Kyle R. Richmond
Public Information Officer
Government Accountability Board

March 2008 SVRS Expenditures

TYPES OF EXPENDITURES	Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures
RENT RISSER	\$3,472.48	\$19,916.36
RENT COMMERCE	\$5,578.83	\$55,788.30
INTERFACES		\$0.00
Agency Partner Interface Expenses with DHFS	\$0.00	\$1,063.62
Agency Partner Interface Expenses with AAMVA/VSSA	\$0.00	\$4,146.74
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (HEARTLAND)	\$0.00	\$24,998.25
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (UW-Learning Innovations)	\$12,025.00	\$74,525.00
IT - SERVICES (DET) - E-mail	\$95.10	\$95.10
SASI Agency User & Computer File Space Charges	\$2,822.90	\$26,323.01
TELEPHONE EXPENSES		\$0.00
AT&T Phone Charges	\$502.78	\$3,306.66
WISLINE	\$614.58	\$2,339.45
Cell Phone Charges	\$966.78	\$4,225.68
SOFTWARE LICENSES (Captivate)	\$0.00	\$4,207.69
SOFTWARE LICENSES (Insight)	\$29,222.31	\$29,222.31
FAX/PHOTOCOPIER	\$0.00	\$2,477.31
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	\$25.00	\$210.00
Office Supplies	\$2,377.74	\$2,715.43
Purchasing Card (Misc.)	\$0.00	\$3,156.68
SVRS APPLICATION TRAINING TRAVEL	\$161.00	\$15,913.81
USER ACCEPTANCE TRAINING TRAVEL	\$0.00	\$955.04
ADMIN TRAVEL	\$1,178.00	\$1,560.16
GENERAL SERVICES BILL		\$0.00
Fleet Services	\$8,835.00	\$52,965.00
State Telecom System (STS) - Long Distance Usage	\$229.68	\$454.16
Postage	\$8,496.29	\$13,526.97
UPS /Federal Express	\$26.52	\$1,989.46
Printing	\$30,070.24	\$36,316.96
Consolidated Data Network (T-1 Line)	\$320.00	\$2,560.00
DOA CHARGE BACKS	\$0.00	\$0.00
Liability Insurance	\$0.00	\$287.88
Workers Comp Insurance	\$0.00	\$1,143.45
Property Insurance	\$0.00	\$257.36
Financial Services	\$0.00	\$4,417.50
Job Postings	\$0.00	\$250.91
FY-08 Childcare Assessment	\$0.00	\$880.69
TOTAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES	\$107,020.23	\$392,196.94
SALARIES & BENEFITS		
Salary Expenses - Staff (16.0 FTE)	\$44,683.82	\$465,897.14
Limited Term Employees (5.0 LTE)	\$14,965.04	\$133,389.78
Fringe Benefits Cost	\$24,566.89	\$235,927.16
TOTAL SALARY & BENEFITS	\$84,215.75	\$835,214.08
TOTAL SPENDING	\$191,235.98	\$1,227,411.02



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





CITY OF WAWATOSA

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Carla A. Ledesma, CMC
City Clerk

May 5, 2008

The Honorable Senator James O. Sullivan
15 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Sen. Sullivan:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the GAB's progress report with respect to four specific issues previously identified by the Legislative Audit Bureau. My comments are as follows:

Data Matches

It will be a *great* help this fall if the various patches referred to in Mr. Kennedy's report actually enable the different data bases to talk to each other. While the 'felon lists' and 'death lists' provided by the county are helpful, they are provided at a time when the staff has the least amount of time to devote to them. I understand that in order to be as up-to-date as possible, the lists cannot be provided far in advance. However, dedicating an employee, pre-election, to reviewing these lists, updating the data base, and comparing against absentee ballots already received has been very frustrating. So many other tasks also need to be done in the weeks before an election! Having a system that automatically inactivates ineligible voters (deceased and felon) will relieve staff of this tedious, yet important, task.

Municipal staffs will still need to pull these inactive records (the actual registration cards) from the pool of active registered voters; that, however, can be accomplished as time permits.

What would also be helpful is for the different 'nodes' in SVRS to talk to each other. Currently, if a voter who is on the permanent absentee ballot list dies, staff not only has to (1) cancel any outstanding ballots, but must also (2) cancel the permanent absentee ballot status, and (3) cancel the actual voter record. That is, a voter's file must be 'touched' *three* times in SVRS to fully cancel a voter in this category because SVRS doesn't automatically update the Absentee Application node when the Voter node is updated. This is a constant source of frustration for staff; it also leaves open the possibility that a deceased voter will still be issued an absentee ballot for the next election because (thanks to human error and SVRS's inability to talk to itself) the person's absentee ballot status wasn't cancelled.

Address Verification Cards

Extending statutory deadlines for entering new registrations is absolutely necessary. The need for rapid entry between the February and April elections, and between the September and November elections is obvious. After the April election, deadlines ought to be relaxed somewhat. Clerks who are also treasurers (and whose staffs deal with duties of both offices) can likely benefit from the additional time; they are also dealing with tax payments, license renewals, etc., during this period.

Allowing 40 business days following the November election is still somewhat unrealistic, as the 40th day falls somewhere right after New Year's Day. Offices are closed during the holidays, so data entry time is

lost. Wauwatosa had over 5,800 election-day registrations in 2000 and 5,300 in 2004. With our legacy systems, it took until the end of the first week of January to enter registrations in a system that was faster than SVRS. I'm simply not convinced 40 business days is realistic. I'm limited by the number of SVRS-certified computers and available trained personnel to complete data entry. How much overtime and temporary help are municipalities expected to pay to meet the 40-business day deadline? Elections are not the only job that clerks' office and clerk/treasurers' offices perform. We can't perform data entry 40 hours per week. License renewals (again), tax collection, meetings, and a plethora of other duties also demand our time. There is also the very real issue of staff burn-out and the physical toll that constant key-boarding takes on the human body. SVRS requires many keystrokes to accomplish tasks.

Concern with the Statewide Voter Registration System

Wauwatosa used the absentee component of SVRS for both 2008 elections (and 2007's) since maintaining a dual system is impractical for a community of this size. One continuing concern that I hope the patches correct is ...functionality?....accuracy? I'm not sure how to characterize it. Let me give an example of what we've run into:

Absentee labels are run in named batches; this reduces the possibility of stuffing the wrong ballot into the wrong envelope since the employee is working on a single ward or location at a time. When a batch is ordered run, SVRS reports that XX number of absentee ballot applications were processed successfully. It also reports if an application did not process successfully. So, the operator is expecting that XX labels will be printed. That doesn't always happen. Sometimes fewer labels print out than expected. So, it forces staff to keep track of how many paper absentee applications it has on file for a certain batch, so that that number can be compared against what actually prints out. We won't have time to do this for November. We have to trust that the system will print out what it says it is going to print out.

When a label doesn't print out as expected, there is often no discernible reason for the failure. The record looks fine; and when asked to re-print the missing label, SVRS will produce it. But we shouldn't have to be repeating this step over and over again until we get all the expected labels. Again, we won't have time for this duplication of effort in November.

Conversely, there were at least two incidents in April where SVRS reported that it had processed applications and printed labels, but hadn't. (We could check this because we keep copies of every label printed for each election.)

Promulgation of Administrative Rules

No comment at present.

Polling Place Accessibility

No comment at present.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the update report. I hope my remarks are helpful to you.

Sincerely,



Carla A. Ledesma, CMC
City Clerk





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:
State Senator Jim Sullivan
State Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

May 19, 2008

Mr. Kevin Kennedy, Legal Counsel
Government Accountability Board
17 West Main Street, Suite 310
Madison, Wisconsin 53701

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Thank you for your March 2008 report, which was submitted in response to the recommendations offered by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau in its evaluation of compliance with elections laws (report 07-16).

In reviewing your report, we note several areas where implementation of the audit recommendations is ongoing, including:

- the provision this summer of an interface and training to municipal clerks in order to conduct data matches required by the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA);
- the needed improvements to online performance, processing times, suspending voter registrations, and absentee ballot processing for the Statewide Voter Registration System; and
- the promulgation of administrative rules as recommended by the Legislative Audit Bureau in its 2005 and 2007 audit reports. We are pleased note that the Government Accountability Board reviewed draft rule language at its meeting on May 5, 2008.

In addition, your follow-up report recommends extensions to the 30-day statutory deadline for entering new registrants into the Statewide Voter Registration System. While your report specifies recommended changes to the deadline for certain elections, it is silent on how and when the Government Accountability Board plans to ask the Legislature to consider the statutory modifications necessary to affect these changes.

As we continue to monitor the progress of the Government Accountability Board in implementing the audit recommendations, we request that by September 2, 2008, you submit a follow-up report that:

- confirms municipal clerk access to the data match interface and the provision of online training to these clerks;

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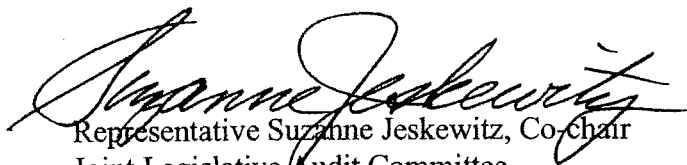
- describes progress on improving processing times, suspending voter registrations, and processing absentee ballots in the Statewide Voter Registration System;
- indicates the status of administrative rule promulgation as of September 2, 2008; and
- specifies your plan for seeking statutory changes to alter the 30-day requirement for entering information from new registrants into the Statewide Voter Registration System.

Thank you for your cooperation and for the progress you have made in assessing polling place accessibility. We look forward to receiving your report on September 2.

Sincerely,



Senator Jim Sullivan, Co-chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee



Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

cc: Janice Mueller
State Auditor



Advocates Outraged After Audit Finds Polling Sites Inaccessible

Elections Officials Say They Will Take Actions

UPDATED: 12:41 pm CST January 8, 2008



MADISON, Wis. -- Advocates for those with disabilities said that they're outraged by an audit that found many Wisconsin polling places are inaccessible.

State auditors who visited polling sites in the November 2006 election found parking, entrances and voting areas that could not be reached by the disabled.

Disability Rights Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities said that those findings are unacceptable.

The groups are calling on the new Government Accountability Board to do more to verify that polling places are accessible as required under federal law.

State elections official Kevin Kennedy said that the board will take steps to do so during upcoming elections in February and April.

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