

Elections Commission: Notice Regarding Ballots in Congressional District 2

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Elections Commission on Friday, September 23 informed local clerks that voters in Congressional District 2 (CD2) will receive a notice alerting them of an error on their November General Election ballot.

Wisconsin law allows independent candidates to include a statement of principle, if any, in five words or less, along with their name on the ballot in place of the “independent” label as long as the statement was included on the candidate’s nomination papers. Due to an administrative error by state level election officials, county clerks in United States Congressional District 2 did not receive all required information to include on the applicable ballots before having those ballots printed.

“We deeply regret this unfortunate mistake and any impact it may have,” said WEC Administrator Meagan Wolfe. “However, voters should know that the candidates on the ballot all remain the same, and the mistake will not prevent any votes from being counted in the CD2 contest, including those that have already been voted via absentee ballot.”

✖ The WEC has determined that the only feasible solution to this unfortunate error is for local clerks to issue a notice to prior, current, and future voters within CD2 about the absence of the statement of principle on their ballots.

Reprinting hundreds of thousands of ballots in CD2 would likely be financially and physically impossible at this point in the election cycle.

The notice will alert CD2 voters that there was a mistake in the listing for the Representative in Congress on their ballot and will show what the ballot should have looked like. The notice also briefly answers potential voter questions. A copy of the notice is attached with this communication.

Voters who already received an absentee ballot by mail will receive the notice as a letter. Voters who will receive an absentee ballot by mail moving forward will receive the notice within their instruction packet. The notice will also be posted at all in-person absentee voting locations and at all polling places within CD2. Clerks also print sample ballots which are published in their paper of record and in other public places. The published sample ballots will also include the attached notice.

Ballots used in CD2 will not be changed or reprinted in any way. All candidates for Representative in Congress for Congressional District 2 remain the same despite the mistake. Votes cast on the ballot will not be affected by the mistake.

The WEC plans to reimburse localities for the cost of printing, mailing, or otherwise distributing the notices.

“In the rush of preparing for the November General Election, we made an unintentional error that we need to notify voters about,” Wolfe said. “We sincerely regret the error and will work closely with local election officials to address it and keep voters informed. We also plan to review our own protocols to prevent such a mistake from happening again.”

Statutory References

The requirement to print the statement of principle, if provided by an independent candidate, is outlined in statute in the following places:

- [5.64\(1\)\(e\)1.](#) “... Along with the names of the independent candidates shall appear the party or principle of the candidates, if any, in 5 words or less, as shown on their nomination papers.
- [5.64\(1\)\(es\)](#) “...**Along with the names of the independent candidates shall appear the party or principle of the candidates, if any, in 5 words or less, as shown on their nomination papers.**”