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Important Reminders for Voters
about the February 16 Spring Primary

MADISON, WI – Voters across Wisconsin who plan to vote absentee in the Spring Primary on Tuesday, February 16, should return their absentee ballots as soon as possible, according to the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

"If you already have your absentee ballot, please do not wait to return it," said Meagan Wolfe, Wisconsin's chief election official. "All absentee ballots must be back to your municipal clerk or your polling place by 8 p.m. on Election Day, or they will not be counted."

The U.S. Postal Service advises voters to mail their ballots back one week before the deadline for it to arrive. Voters returning ballots less than a week before an election should drop them off at their municipal clerk's office, in an official absentee ballot drop box if one is available, or at the polling place on Election Day, Wolfe said.

Voters who wish to vote absentee in-person or register to vote still have time to visit their municipal clerk's office before the deadline of 5 p.m. Friday, February 12. Some municipalities may offer in-person absentee voting without voter registration on Saturday, February 13. Contact your municipal clerk's office for their schedule.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16. Election Day voters are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings due to the ongoing pandemic, but face coverings are not required, Wolfe said.

Voters can find everything they need to know about the election at MyVote Wisconsin: https://myvote.wi.gov, including what's on their ballot and where to vote.

In this primary, all voters will have candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction while voters in two legislative districts will have partisan primaries in a special election. The special primaries are in State Senate District 13 and State Assembly District 89.

In addition, there will be 101 primaries for county, school district, city, village and town officials, according to data compiled by the WEC. There will be one local referendum on the ballot.

Photo ID required

"Most people already have the ID they need to vote," Wolfe said. "If you don't have a photo ID you still have time to get a free one at the DMV, but you should not delay."

Acceptable photo IDs for voting include a Wisconsin driver license or Wisconsin state ID card, Veterans Health Administration ID card, military ID card, U.S. passport, tribal ID card and some student ID cards. Voters who do not receive a state ID card by Election Day can still use the receipt issued by the DMV. A full list of acceptable photo IDs is available at www.BringIt.WI.gov.

Wolfe reminds voters that the address on their photo ID does not need to match the address on the poll book. "When you show your ID, you are proving your identity, not where you live," she said. "Voters prove their residence when they register to vote."

Also, voters should know that all Wisconsin driver licenses and state ID cards work for photo ID, regardless of whether they have the "Real ID" star on them, Wolfe said.

Checking your registration

Wolfe urges voters to visit the MyVote Wisconsin website (https://MyVote.WI.gov) to check their registration status, see what's on their ballot and find their polling place. You can find your voter information by putting in your name and date of birth, but if you're not registered yet you can search by your address to see what's on your ballot and where to vote.

If you know you are registered but cannot find yourself on the MyVote Wisconsin website, don't worry, Wolfe said. It is possible that there's a typo in your name or date of birth preventing the website from finding your record. Also, some addresses are not yet in MyVote because no one has previously registered to vote there. If MyVote cannot find your record or your address, please contact your municipal clerk's office or the Wisconsin Elections Commission. Contact numbers are on the MyVote website.

Register or reregister at the polls

Wolfe reminds voters that if they plan to register for the first time or update their registration with a change of name or address at the polls on Election Day, they must bring a proof of residence document like a utility bill, showing the voter's current name and address.

"Election Day registration ensures that everyone who is qualified to vote will get to vote," said Wolfe, administrator of the WEC. "However, you must bring a current proof of residence document to register on Election Day."

Acceptable proof of residence documents also include a lease, bank statement, cell phone bill or other official government documents, and can be on paper or an electronic device like a smartphone or tablet. A list of acceptable documents is available at https://elections.wi.gov/publications/voter-guides/proof-of-residence. Before Election Day, you must have lived at your current address for at least 28 days to be eligible to vote, but the proof of residence document does not need to be 28 days old.

You can also register to vote before Election Day. Registration in your municipal clerk's office takes place until 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election (February 16, 2020). Remember, you will still need to bring your proof of residence document to register. By law, Wisconsin's electronic voter registration system is turned off within 20 days of an election but will be available again on Feb. 17 after the Spring Primary. Voters can still start the registration process

online at https://myvote.wi.gov by filling out an electronic form, printing it and bringing the paper copy to their municipal clerk's office or the polling place on Election Day.

Other important reminders:

Absentee ballots must be received by Election Day. If you had an absentee ballot mailed to you, it must be received by your polling place or municipal clerk's office by 8 p.m. on Election Day (February 16, 2020).

Your voter registration information and your vote are safe. Wisconsin's voter registration system is secure and encrypted to protect from hackers. All of Wisconsin's voting systems are paper-based and contain multiple checks and redundancies, including pre-election testing and processes for media, campaign, and election officials to check, audit, and validate the results.

Provisional ballots are available if you don't have a photo ID. A voter may cast a provisional ballot if the voter does not have a photo ID, forgets to bring a photo ID to the polls, or if the poll workers do not accept the ID for some reason. A provisional ballot is just like a regular ballot, except that it is placed in a special envelope and is not counted unless the voter returns with an acceptable photo ID. The deadlines for fixing a provisional ballot are 8 p.m. on Election Day at the polling place or by 4 p.m. the Friday after the election in the municipal clerk's office. Voters who left their photo ID at home can also simply retrieve it and then cast a ballot rather than casting a provisional ballot. However, provisional ballots are not available for individuals who are unable to complete their registration.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.