

ELECTION INTEGRITY

Protecting Vulnerable Voters



- Judy went on MyVote Wisconsin (www.myvote.wi.gov) and discovered her mother, Shirley, voted absentee for the November 3, 2020, election
- Shirley died on October 9, 2020 Before the election
- According to My Vote Wisconsin, prior to being admitted to the Ridgewood Care Facility, Shirley last voted in 2016





JUDY CONTACTS RIDGEWOOD CARE CENTER

- Executive Director stated that the WEC gave facility staff the authority to help residents fill out their ballots
- Judy asked how Shirley could have voted without any knowledge of current events or the news
- The Executive Director stated the staff would ask the residents who they voted for in the past and following party lines that would be their choice
- Judy asked, "So if she could only recall JFK as President, Democrat would be their choice?"
- The Executive Director answered "Yes"
- Judy asked about Shirley's broken glasses and impaired vision how can we know the staff member assisting filled in the ballot correctly
- The Executive Director stated he "hoped" the staff would be honest





ORIGINAL COMPLAINT TO THE WISCONSIN ELECTION COMMISSION

- NOVEMBER 24TH, 2020

- Judy filed a sworn affidavit with the Wisconsin Election Commission stating that she believed the Ridgewood Care Facility "took advantage" of her mother's "diminished mental capacity and filled out ballot(s) in her name."
- Shirley, Judy's Mother
 - Broken glasses no interest in reading or keeping up on current events
 - Difficulty recognizing her daughter
 - Could not remember her last meal
 - Would not know what day it is
 - Saw flying objects outside of her room that were not there



- They received letters from the Wisconsin Election Commission ("WEC") dated March 12, 2020, June 24, 2020, and September 25, 2020, stating that "Municipalities shall not use the Special Voting Deputy process" and should instead mail the absentee ballots
- No notice was posted at any of the facilities because of COVID-19
- 42 Ridgewood residents voted
- 38 Ridgewood residents made a fresh request for an absentee ballot during 2020
- The Voting Clerk stated during a Presidential or non-Presidential election, usually approximately 10 people will vote and 0 to 3 people will make a fresh request for an absentee ballot from the Ridgewood Care Center
- RASO received copies of the Request for Absentee Ballots and the Ballot Envelopes

Mount Pleasant Village Hall





Wisconsin Elections Commission

212 East Washington Avenue | Third Floor | P.O. Box 7984 | Madison, WI 53707-7984 (608) 266-8005 | elections@wi.gov | elections.wi.gov

DATE: For the March 12, 2020 Commission Meeting

TO: Members, Wisconsin Elections Commission

FROM: Meagan Wolfe, Administrator

Wisconsin Elections Commission

SUBJECT: Guidance Regarding Election Procedures and Public Health Emergency

Governor Evers issued Executive Order #72 today proclaiming that a public health emergency exists in the State of Wisconsin as a result of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. The Order designates the Department of Health Services as the lead agency in responding to the public health emergency and directs all state agencies to assist in the State's ongoing response to the emergency. A copy of the Executive Order is attached.

Also today, the Department of Health Services (DHS) issued directives related to public health, vulnerable populations and large public gatherings. The DHS directives included provisions related to nursing homes and other licensed care facilities, including that all "non-essential" individuals be prohibited from visiting such facilities. The directive includes some exceptions such as a visit from one family member per day but all individuals entering care facilities must be screened for coronavirus infection and recent travel.

The Executive Order and DHS directive make it necessary to provide guidance to local election regarding specific election procedures for the Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary as well as the May 12, 2020 Special Election in the 7th Congressional District. The two most immediate issues requiring Commission attention relate to the Special Voting Deputy process and polling places which are currently located at care facilities. WEC staff has received numerous inquiries from local election officials expressing concerns and seeking guidance regarding these issues.

Special Voting Deputy Process

Wis. Stat. § 6.875 outlines the process for voting by special voting deputy (SVD). SVD's are individuals who are deputized by the clerk of each municipality to not only bring enough ballots to each residential care facility to vote, but to assist the voters with the voting process. Beginning Monday, March 16, municipal clerks are required to begin sending two SVD's to each facility for two visits prior to the election to conduct in-person, on-site voting with the residents.

Sometimes this process happens in a common area in the facility, and sometimes the voting occurs in individual voters' rooms depending on the voter's mobility and health needs. The process also requires that public observers be allowed to watch the voting process in these

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

Dean Knudson, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Julie M. Glancey | Ann S. Jacobs | Robert Spindell | Mark L. Thom

Administrator Meagan Wolfe

Mount Pleasant Village Hall

1) In light of Executive Order #72 and directives of the Department of Health Services, the Commission finds that Special Voting Deputies are "non-essential" individuals who are not permitted to enter nursing homes and other care facilities without completing a screening process that is not feasible to implement prior to the Spring Election and Presidential Primary. For that election and the May 12, 2020 Special Election in the 7th Congressional District, the Commission directs that municipalities shall not use the Special Voting Deputy process to serve residents in care facilities and instead shall transmit absentee ballots to those voters by mail.

Review of Documents

APPLICATION FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS

- Pre-filled out by facility staff
- The Certification of being "indefinitely confined" prechecked by staff

OR

- The Certification of being "indefinitely confined" post-checked by the municipal clerk

VOTER ENVELOPES

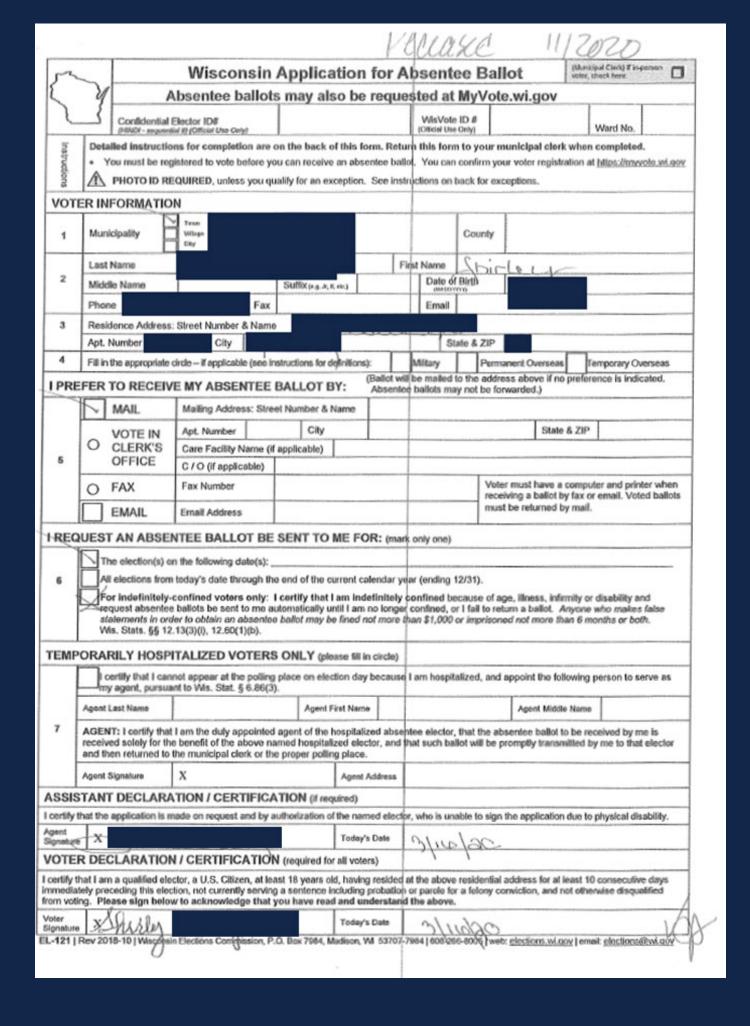
- Certification of Witness - Facility staff

WECLETTERS TO MUNICIPAL CLERKS

- Coordinate with the dates of the open meetings by the WEC
- Open meetings can be viewed on WisEye www.wiseye.org



Review of Documents







WISCONSIN STATUTE

LEGISLATIVE POLICY. The legislature finds that voting is a constitutional right, the vigorous exercise of which should be strongly encouraged. In contrast, voting by absentee ballot is a privilege exercised wholly outside the traditional safeguards of the polling place. The legislature finds that the privilege of voting by absentee ballot must be carefully regulated to prevent the potential for fraud or abuse; to prevent overzealous solicitation of absent electors who may prefer not to participate in an election; to prevent undue influence on an absent elector to vote for or against a candidate or to cast a particular vote in a referendum; or other similar abuses.



WISCONSIN STATUTE

Absentee Voting in Facilities

- This statute is the "exclusive means" of absentee voting in residential care facilities
- Shall dispatch two Special Voting Deputies ("SVDs") to the facility
- The SVDs shall personally deliver the ballot
- NO employee (or past employee of the last two years) may be an SVD
- Notice of the SVDs visit shall be posted at the facility
- The SVDs shall witness the vote and may assist in marking the ballot
- The SVDs shall NOT accept an absentee ballot not issued by an SVD
- No individual other the a SVD or relative may assist the voter
- The SVDs shall seal the ballot envelope and deliver it to the clerk



WISCONSIN STATUTE

Absentee Voting in Facilities

•§ 6.875(6)(e) – "If a qualified elector is not able to cast his or her ballot on 2 separate visits by the deputies to the home or facility, the deputies shall so inform the municipal clerk . . . Who may then send the ballot to the elector . . . "

The WEC falsely reasoned that since the Special Voting Deputies could not be allowed into any facilities, the Special Voting Deputies "program" could be "suspended", and the municipalities could go directly to the mailing process. The WEC also improperly/illegally advised the facilities to have staff members assist the residents in voting.



UNITED STATES

CONSTITUTION

Article II, Section 1, paragraph 2 — The state legislature is to determine the "Manner" in which the President is elected

Article I, Section 4, paragraph 1 — It is up to the state legislature to determine "the Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives"

RIDGEWOOD CARE FACILITY DECEMBER 18, 2020

- The Executive Director stated he "hoped" his staff was "honest" while marking the voting ballot for the residents
- The Director of Recreational Therapy stated that if a resident could only point to the ballot, her staff would fill in the appropriate dot
- The Director of Recreational Therapy was "confident" Shirley wanted to vote, but then admitted she did not have contact with Shirley – her staff would have contact with the residents
- The Activities Aid stated if the resident did not want to vote, she would come back <u>later</u>
 - The Activities Aid stated she would leave the news channel on for a few days and then come back and see if the resident wanted to vote (List of preferred channels or NBC)
 - The Activities Aid stated she would keep the ballots in her desk drawer when she was waiting for the residents to decide to vote

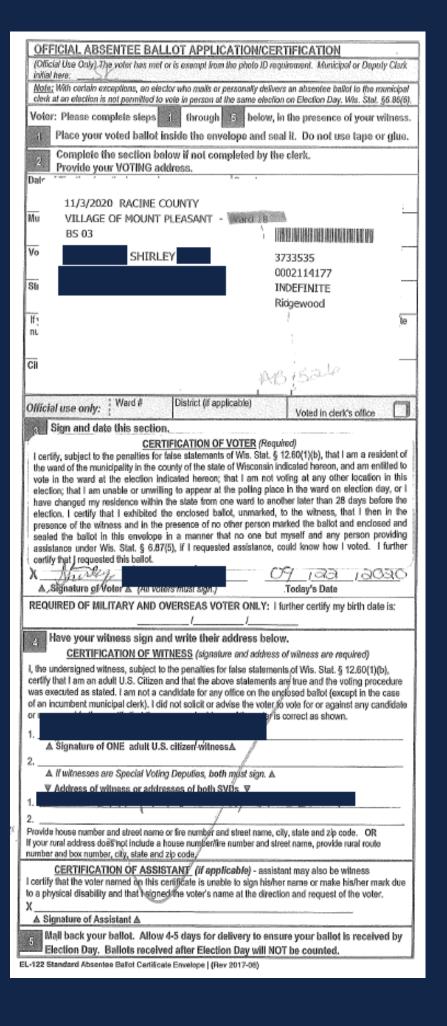


RIDGEWOOD CARE FACILITY DECEMBER 18, 2020

- The procedure implemented by the facility did not comply with the instructions on the ballot envelope
- The Director of Recreational Therapy and the Activities Aids agreed that:
 - If the resident did or did not vote, the Activities Aid would place the ballot in the envelope (unsealed) and give it to the Director of Recreational Therapy
 - The Director of Recreational Therapy would seal the ballot envelope and mail it to the municipal clerk



Review of Documents





Other Concerned Families

DF was adamant that her mother, OF, would not have requested an absentee ballot. She was unable to remember what she ate for breakfast that day. DF stated, "It is so hard to get her to sign something, even things that I need, you know, to conduct business, it is very hard to get her to sign anything. So, she would not have requested a ballot and then sat there and signed it, no. I just don't believe that." According to My Vote Wisconsin (Since 2012), there is no record of OF voting in any other election.

RP stated that her father, NG, had difficulty recognizing his own grandchildren. He would not know that Trump was the president nor who was elected the new president, and he would not know what the candidates stood for on the issues. RP stated NG only asked about "Doritos" and "Snickers". According to My Vote Wisconsin (Since 2012), there is no record of NG voting in any other election. When asked if NG would have the mental ability to express his desire for an absentee ballot and exercise his right to vote, RP responded, "No! No, I'm sorry, no!". According to My Vote Wisconsin (Since 2012), there is no record of RP voting in any other election.



Other Concerned Families

LM stated her mother, RL, is confused, not sure where she is, does not recognize her own children, and is not right in her own mind. LM stated RL would not have known who the candidates were, and someone had to have taken advantage of her. According to MyVote Wisconsin (since 2012), there is no record of RL voting in any other election.

RS stated his mother, FP, is 102-years-old and is experiencing dementia. RS stated that FP is starting to forget to eat; that she cannot recognize her own children; that she is starting to forget to eat; and that she only remembers the past. According to MyVote Wisconsin (since 2012), FP voted in this election and an election in 2012.

TM stated his father, MR, did not have the desire to vote absentee. TM stated MR informed her and her mother that if he cannot vote in person, he did not want to vote. According to MyVote Wisconsin (since 2012), there is no record of MR voting in any other election.

Other Concerned Families

RM is the legal guardian for SL, and RM stated that SL has been determined to be incompetent by a probate court. RM stated she believed SL's right to vote had been taken away. RM stated SL is unable to make any decisions for herself and she has no ability to know what is going on. RM stated SL would not know how to request an absentee ballot. RM stated SL is not allowed to sign any legal documents because she is so impaired. RM stated SL would have no inclination to vote and she would have no idea what she was doing. AS stated, her mother, SL, was suffering from dementia and she did not have the sound mind necessary to request an absentee ballot and to exercise her right to vote. According to MyVote Wisconsin (since 2012), SL voted in this election and an election in 2012

GH stated his mother, BH, would ask him, "Who are you?" and GH would respond, "I'm your youngest boy." GH stated BH believed her own mother died a few weeks ago but her mother actually died in 1965. According to My Vote Wisconsin (since 2012), BH voted in two elections in 2020 and no other elections.

WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION



SECRETARY

Marge Bostelmann



COMMISSIONER

Julie M. Glancey



CHAIR
Ann S. Jacobs



COMMISSIONER

Dean Knudson



COMMISSIONER
Robert F. Spindell, Jr.



VICE - CHAIR

Mark L. Thomsen







MARCH 10, 2020

- The WEC sent a letter to the Governor requesting the "suspension" of "several provisions of Wisconsin election law"
 - Special Voting Deputies
 - Moving the location of polling places
- The Governor's Office informed the WEC that the Governor does not have the power to "suspend" parts of Wisconsin's voting law during an emergency

MARCH 12, 2020

- Governor Ever's issued Executive Order #72
- The WEC issued a directive stating Special Voting Deputies shall not be sent to facilities
- Commissioner Knudsen, "what we are really saying here, is once again, we are saying that, despite what the law says, the election commission is saying, in this instance, we need to have some flexibility, to not follow the law."

MAY 26, 2020

- Governor's extended "Safer at Home" order expires

JUNE 24, 2020

- The WEC extended their previous March 12, 2020, orders
- Commissioner Knudson, "We need to go back to following the law, but for the Special Voting Deputies, following the letter of the law here would mean putting hundreds and hundreds of nursing home residents' lives at severe risk. There is got to be a way to do this without doing that."
- Commissioner Spindell was concerned with fraud in nursing homes and suggests PPE's



SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

- The WEC extended their previous March 12, 2020 orders
- Commissioner Spindell stated the law stated the WEC is supposed to do something, and the WEC is not doing that task Spindell asked where that power came from. He also suggested use of technology to facilitate Special Voting Deputies.
- Commissioner Knudson stated, "My thinking going back to March on this, from the time I first communicated with the Governor saying I thought that we should not follow this law during this pandemic."
- Chair Jacobs stated the "state law" or "rulings of DHS" would not allow for Special Voting Deputies inside of facilities



Review of Documents

How to assist the voter in filling out their absentee ballot

If a voter requests assistance, you may read the ballot, including candidate names, party affiliations and ballot instructions, to the voter or mark the ballot as directed by the voter. If the voter asks questions about individual candidates or their political platform, you cannot answer those questions. You cannot in any way prompt the voter to vote for a particular candidate. If uncertain for whom to vote, the voter may decide to leave a contest unvoted. After assisting the voter, you will sign the ballot in the box that says, "Certification of Voter Assistance."



Absentee Voting at Care Facilities in 2020

Your Role as a Care Facility Administrator

In a typical election, Special Voting Deputies (SVDs) may be coming into your facilities and conducting absentee voting with your residents. However, due to safety concerns, SVDs will not be entering your facility for the November election. Instead ballots will be mailed out to individual voters with current requests on file. Many care facility and nursing home residents rely on family members for assistance in voting. Because most care facilities and nursing homes are not allowing guests at this time, some voters may require assistance from care facility staff to vote. We know that this may be difficult for many facilities due to competing priorities and staffing. This document will provide resources to make absentee voting and registering to vote as smooth as possible for your facility and your residents.

As a care facility administrator or staff member, you are able to:

- Assist residents in filling out their ballots or certificate envelopes.
- Assist residents in completing voter registration forms and absentee requests.
- · Sign the special certificate envelope (EL-122sp) if necessary (see below for explanation).
- Witness ballots.

Absentee Voting for Residents of Your Facility

Ballots began being mailed out on September 17 for voters with current absentee requests on file for the November 3 election. Most ballots will be mailed to voters, but some clerks have indicated that they are hand delivering ballots to care facilities in a large envelope or other sealed container. After receiving ballots, you must distribute ballots individually to those voters. If a voter no longer lives in your facility or is deceased, please mark the ballot carrier envelope "moved" or "deceased" and return it to the municipal clerk as soon as possible.

Each absentee carrier envelope should contain the ballot, an instruction sheet and a certificate envelope used to return the ballot (referred to as the EL-122).

How to assist the voter in filling out their absentee ballot

If a voter requests assistance, you may read the ballot, including candidate names, party affiliations and ballot instructions, to the voter or mark the ballot as directed by the voter. If the voter asks questions about individual candidates or their political platform, you cannot answer those questions. You cannot in any way prompt the voter to vote for a particular candidate. If uncertain for whom to vote, the voter may decide to leave a contest unvoted. After assisting the voter, you will sign the ballot in the box that says, "Certification of Voter Assistance."

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JANUARY 15, 2021

- The WEC extended their previous March 12, 2020, orders
- Commissioner Knudson:
 - Expressed his concern that the "policy" of the WEC was "telling the clerks to break the law" and he stated, "But I continue to have great discomfort with the idea that our motion is going to direct them, that we're the ones directing them to break the law."
 - Suggested the use of technology so that all of the policies "as required by law are being followed".
 - The "SVD law is a law" and "some of the prohibitions on visitors at nursing homes . . . was a guidance, a directive."



FEBRUARY 11, 2021

- Legislative Council provided an opinion to the Joint
 Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR)
 that state law does not empower the WEC to waive the Special Voting Deputies, nor does the law contain an exemption for a pandemic
- JCRAR notified the WEC to promulgate an emergency rule or cease issuing such directives

MARCH 2, 2021

- WEC amends their directive and now calls for Special Voting Deputies to be sent to facilities two times prior to mailing the ballot

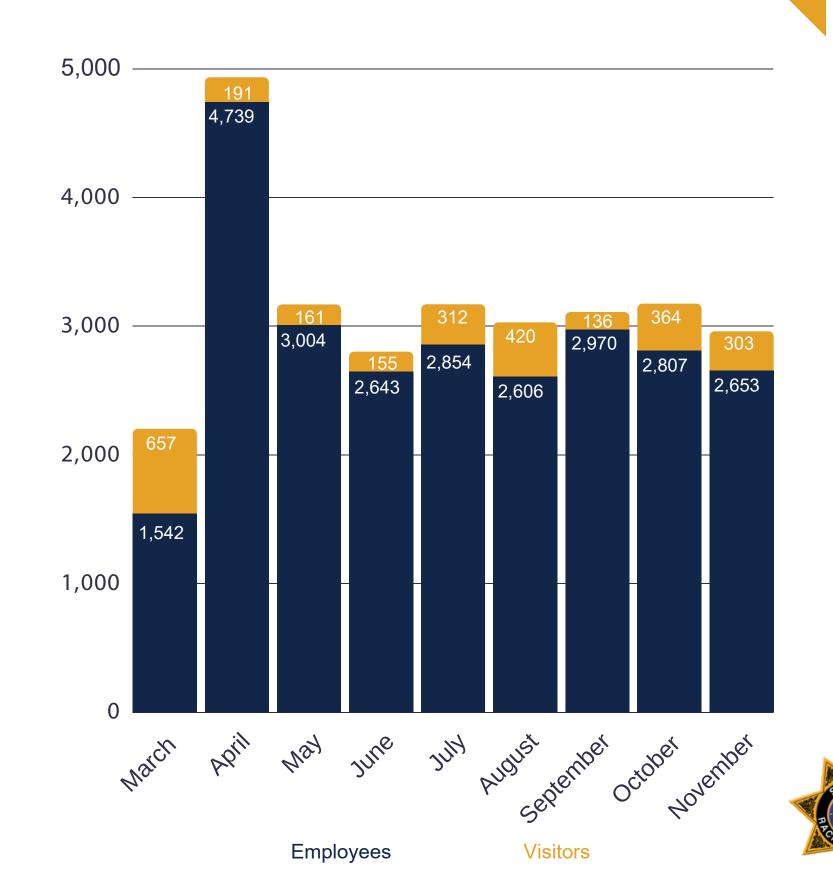


Ridgewood Care Facility

Employees and Visitors

333 Employees

899 Visitors



Interview or Job Interview

24 Times

Orkin Service

19 Times

Kitchen or Kitchen Repair

17 Times

Elevator

10 Times

Instructor

4 Times and 19 Times with Students

TYPES OF VISITORS

Vendor/Vending Machine

17 Times

Cleaning Fish Tank, Cleaning Tanks, or Tank Maintenance

11 Times

Laundry or Laundry Repair

8 Times



Maintenance

6 Times

TYPES OF VISITORS

Copier

4 Times

Clean Bird Cage

3 times

Inspection

2 tim es

Looking for a Job

DoorDash Delivery





WISCONSIN STATUTE Election Fraud

•§ 12.13(2)(b)(7)— "In the course of the person's official duties or on account of the person's official position, intentionally violate or intentionally cause any other person to violate any provision of chs. 5 to 12 for which no other penalty is expressly prescribed."

•§ 12.13(3)(n)— "Receive a ballot from or give a ballot to a person other than the election official in charge."

•§ 12.13(3)(p)— "Receive a completed ballot from a voter unless qualified to do so."

•§ 12.13(3)(s)– "Solicit another elector to offer assistance under s. 6.82 (2) or 6.87 (5), except in the case of an elector who is blind or visually impaired to the extent that the elector cannot read a ballot."



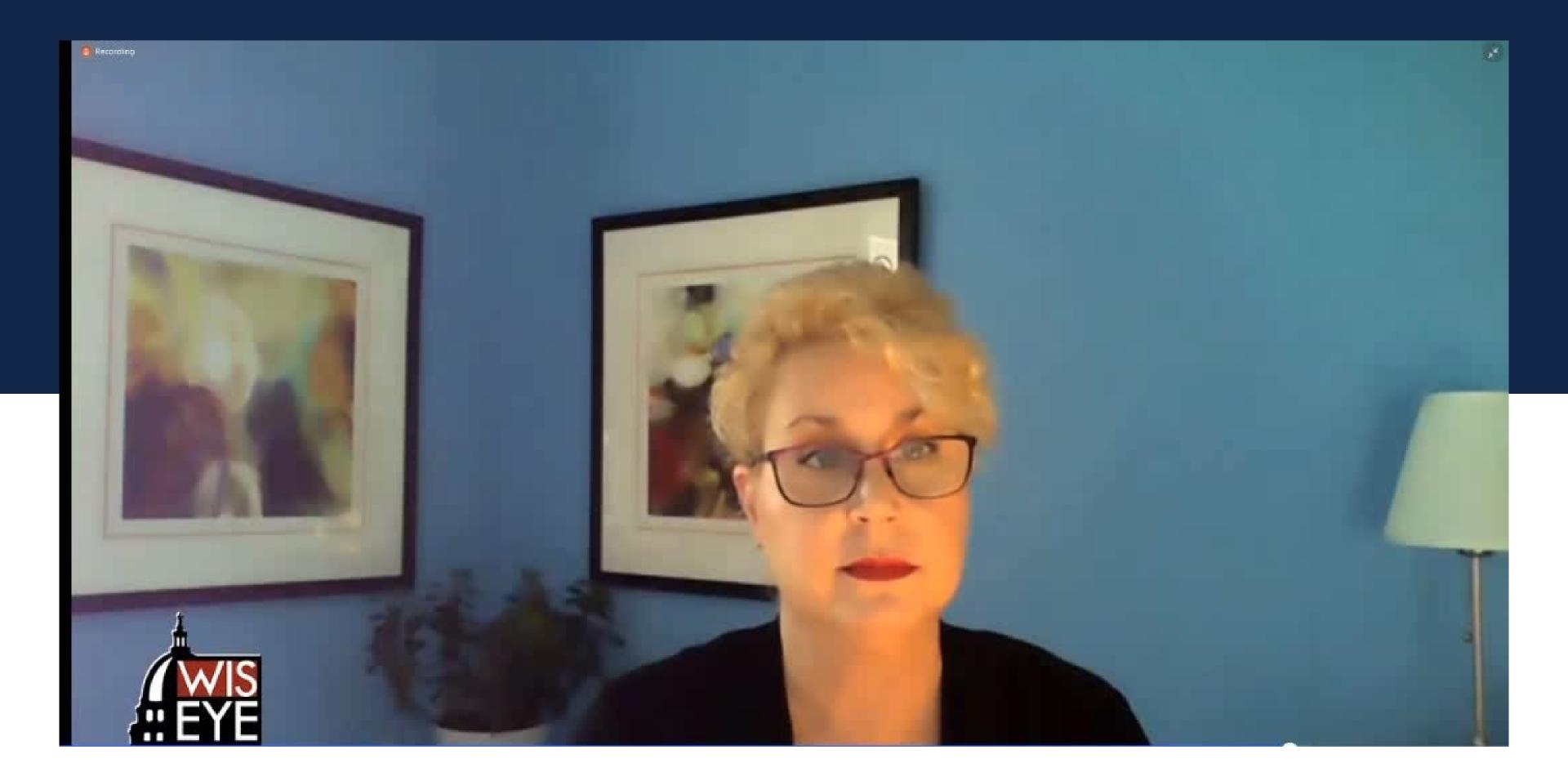


Wisconsin Elections Commission Special Teleconference Meeting

On June 24, 2020, the Wisconsin Elections Commission held a special teleconference meeting to discuss Special Voting Deputies for the August Election.

Categories: Meetings











Commissioner - Wisconsin Elections Commission

WISEYE.ORG

1:24 PM

Moving Forward

Wisconsin State Legislature

Governor

Attorney General



Wisconsin State Legislatiure

Tony Evers
Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin



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