

Election Administration in Wisconsin



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The Political Setting

A major battleground state.

2004: Kerry (49.7%) v. Bush (49.3%)

2000: Gore (47.8%) v. Bush (47.6%)

High voter turnout.

77% in 2004, 54% in 2006

EDR (SDR) since 1976

Politically but not demographically diverse.

The Administrative Setting

The most decentralized system in the country.

72 county clerks.

1,851 municipal clerks (1/4 of all LEOs).

90% of municipalities have less than 5,000 people.

Many clerks lack resources (~1,500 “reliers”).

Government Accountability Board.

Effects of HAVA

EAC data demands.

Improvements in equipment & accessibility.

Few provisional ballots.

Massive undertaking: SVRS.

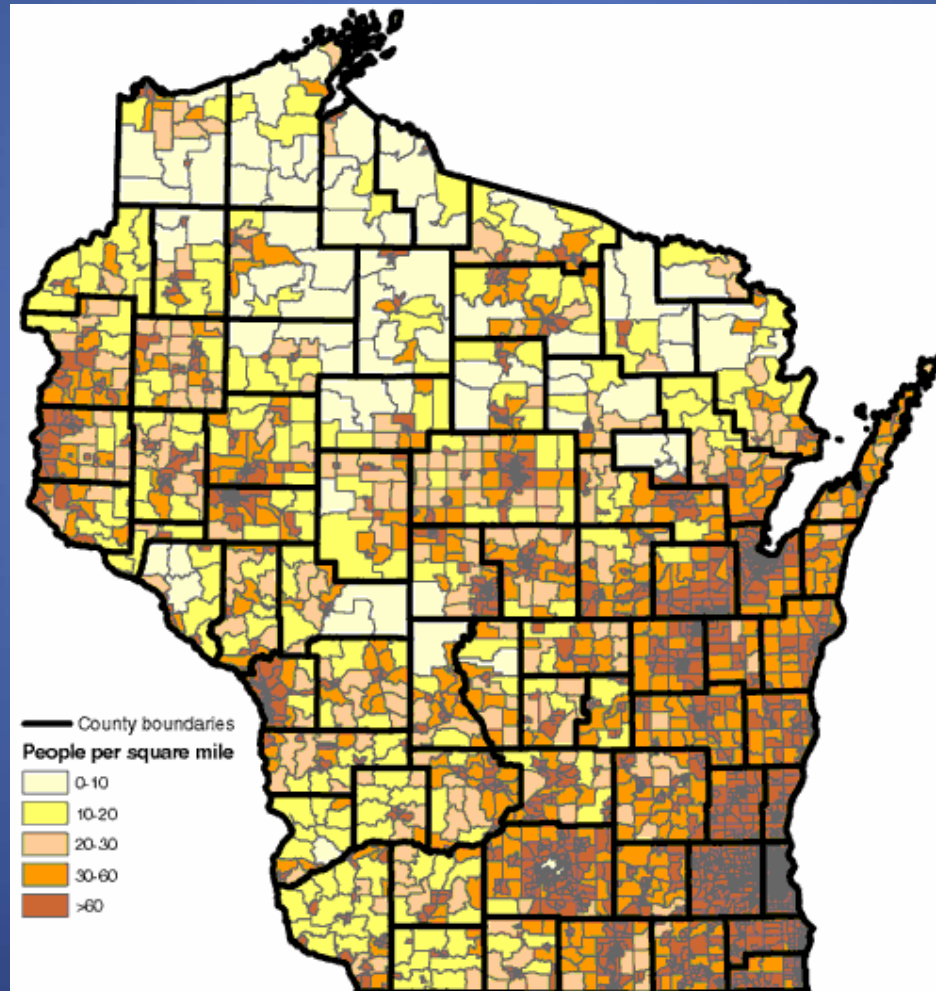
No prior statewide registration system.

Municipalities < 5,000 not required before HAVA.

Accenture settlement.

“HAVA check” still in development.

Uneven Population Density



EAC Data Collection Grant

5 states win \$2m to improve data collection.

Neglected aspect of election administration

Lessons about how to run a grant opportunity

Goals: Better data, best practices, precinct-level.

“Wisconsin Idea”: Partnership of GAB and UW.

Continuing collaboration on SDR and NPPEV.

The Project

Develop a new web-based portal for data collection at municipal level.

Parallel reporting using old and new systems.

Fields match EDS questions.

September 9 primary.

Development: GAB

Training: UW-Extension

Evaluation: UW-Madison Political Science

Challenges

Pace.

Many cooks.

Technology: in-house or commercial.

Flexibility v. uniformity.

Training and compliance.

Absentees (UOCAVA, mail v. in-person).

The Evaluation Component

Did the GAB implement as promised?

Identify best practices & technology transfer.

Analyze data.

Survey municipal & county clerks (web & paper).

Interview stratified sample of 100 in-person.

Academic Questions

- Effects of resources and training
- Elected/appointed
- Partisan/nonpartisan
- Tradeoffs of decentralization.

