



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# KATHY BERNIER

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**Contact:** Rep. Kathy Bernier  
(608) 266-9172

## **Wisconsin Elections: Are We Secure?**

In 2016 there was a great deal of information and misinformation about “Russian Hacking.” People were wondering whether we could trust our election results. Speaking as a former County Clerk for more than 12 years, I understand the systems and processes for running elections. Given everything that was being reported, I can’t say I wasn’t concerned. However, I can say that county clerks, municipal clerks and the Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) have worked very hard to safeguard our elections, and they continue to work on the front lines of election security.

Earlier this month I attended two election-security conferences. The first, a cybersecurity training event put on by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). The second, a two-day gathering in Missouri of invited Secretaries of State and other chief election officials.

As Chair of the Assembly Campaigns and Elections Committee, I want to assure Wisconsin Voters that election administration officials across our state, and indeed across the country, are doing everything they can to protect the integrity of the voting process. This includes securing polling locations, safeguarding the casting of ballots, properly recording and reporting vote totals.

Voters of Wisconsin should know that the computers used in programming electronic voting equipment, and the voting equipment itself, are NOT connected to the internet. Furthermore, Wisconsin’s voter registration system (WisVote) requires multi-factor authentication, ensuring that voters using the system are who they say they are. The

(608) 266-9172  
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0068  
Fax: (608) 282-3668  
Home: (715) 720-0326

P.O. Box 8952 • Madison, WI 53708-8952  
Rep.Bernier@legis.wi.gov

Department of Administration's Division of Enterprise Technology provides many forms of security and works hand in glove with WEC.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recognizes that secure elections are critical. To assist states they provide invaluable infrastructure assistance to election officials and agencies at all levels of government. In fact, the Federal Government has provided significant funding to ensure our elections are safe and secure. Wisconsin received \$6.9 million and has allocated those funds for staffing, information technology security, training and equipment.

With that said, given enough time and access anything can be hacked. Quality training of our local and county election officials ensures that any hacking attempts would be detected and interrupted before they can cause any damage. The Wisconsin Election Commission instituted a process called 'table top training' for county clerks many months ago, and for years we have documented chain of custody and serial numbered clips on election equipment for added security.

The bottom line is that Wisconsin has paper ballot back-up on all of our election equipment. Our equipment is tested and audited on a regular basis. Election night results are not, and have never been, certified final results; please always remember that. Canvassing, auditing and certification of election results comes a few days later.

I am confident in our election process and procedures. Systems provided by our state and local agencies are top shelf. The people working in election administration care deeply about their jobs and role in administering effective and secure elections.

For more information on election security go to:  
<https://www.dhs.gov/topic/election-security>  
<https://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/security>