



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

## Joint Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:

State Senator Robert Cowles

State Representative Samantha Kerkman

NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 9, 2015

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### **LAB and Audit Committee Are Important for Legislative Oversight**

MADISON – Today, the co-chairpersons of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee responded to a legislative proposal that would eliminate the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) and the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by indicating their strong support for and confidence in the quality work of LAB and the professionalism of LAB staff.

Through its audit work with the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, LAB supports the Legislature’s oversight of state agencies by identifying instances or patterns of fraud, statutory noncompliance, waste, and mismanagement. LAB identifies ways state agencies can achieve cost savings and realize efficiencies. LAB also provides policy analysis to inform legislative action on specific programs or more generally across state government.

“For nearly 50 years, audits performed by the Legislative Audit Bureau have been a legislative ‘check’ on state agencies and programs,” said Representative Samantha Kerkman (R-Salem). That the Audit Bureau performs its work externally to state agencies and in a non-partisan manner is crucial to its findings and to the value we place in its work.”

LAB identifies concerns, areas for cost savings, and policy information through its Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement Hotline, which protects the identity of informants by statute.

“The non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau is an invaluable resource to the Legislature and to the people of the state,” said Sen. Robert Cowles. “Our auditors provide insight and proactive recommendations to the Legislature and state agencies that help to protect Wisconsin taxpayers by locating cost saving measures and efficiencies.”

Senator Robert Cowles and Representative Samantha Kerkman (R-Salem), co-chairpersons of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, produced a list of selected noteworthy findings from LAB audits, which accompanies this press release.

More information about the work of LAB and the Joint Legislative Audit Committee is available at [www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab](http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab).

## Selected Noteworthy Findings from the Legislative Audit Bureau

- LAB reported that individuals who intentionally provided DWD with inaccurate information received **\$86.3 million in overpayments of unemployment benefits** from FY 2011-12 through FY 2013-14. DWD subsequently indicated that there were 44,488 such individuals (report 14-15).
- LAB made several recommendations for **Government Accountability Board (GAB) staff to fulfill their statutory duties** in a timely manner, including by conducting post-election reviews to determine if individuals with ongoing felon sentences may have voted. LAB also recommended that staff consistently enforce campaign finance, lobbying, and code of ethics laws, and that staff provide GAB with complete information on their enforcement efforts. GAB reported to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee in April 2015 on the status of its efforts to implement LAB's recommendations (report 14-14).
- LAB analyzed the **state group health insurance billing errors UW System made** from April 2011 through May 2013 and estimated the loss would total between \$10.6 million and \$12.7 million depending on UW System's recovery efforts. This amount was in addition to the \$17.5 million in overpayments UW System made to the Wisconsin Retirement System for 2011 (report 14-4).
- LAB found that DCF did not seek federal reimbursement for all eligible expenditures and that, had it done so, **DCF could have received an estimated \$470,000 in additional federal funds** in 2012 (report 13-15).
- LAB recommended that DHS renegotiate a contract for monitoring and transporting individuals on the supervised release program. **As a result of LAB's recommendation, DHS estimated it will save \$677,400 in FY 2014-15 and \$782,761 in FY 2015-16** (report 13-12).
- LAB analyzed data and other information from multiple state agencies on the extent to which Wisconsin Retirement System **annuitants had returned to work for state agencies**. LAB surveyed 1,000 local governments and all 424 school districts on the extent to which those entities had hired annuitants and the extent to which 28 state agencies had contracted with annuitants for goods and services (report 12-17).
- LAB identified **potential fraud related to 152 FoodShare groups** that made purchases exclusively outside of Wisconsin that both exceeded \$500 and were made more than 50 miles from their reported Wisconsin residences. These purchases totaled \$324,187, including \$151,187 (46.6 percent) that was spent entirely in noncontiguous states (report 12-3).
- LAB **identified 131 state purchasing card transactions totaling \$74,499 that were unnecessary, excessive, or inappropriate**. Examples of these purchases include: an erroneous charge of \$4,350 from an engineering equipment vendor; \$2,384 for accommodations during a personal trip by a state employee; a \$1,799 laptop computer purchased for personal use; a \$714 purchase for a trip to Las Vegas; and a \$695 fox fur stole purchased for a theater production (report 09-8).
- LAB's Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement **Hotline has received over 750 reported allegations** involving public assistance fraud, state employee abuses, and agency mismanagement of state programs since April 2008 (report 14-16).
- LAB identified up to **\$12.0 million in federal funds the Legislature could either spend** on specific public assistance programs or lapse to the General Fund in the 2011-13 biennium.
- LAB completed the **first comprehensive review of overtime in state agencies** in 2008, identified \$65.1 million in overtime payments during 2007, and showed an increase in overtime payments of 15.2 percent since 2005.
- LAB **identified strategies and made recommendations to simplify the wetlands permitting process**, including developing general permits for activities that have minimal effects on wetlands; improve program management, and improve coordination with federal agencies (report 07-6).