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JLAC to Hear From DHS on Missing \$43 Million, Misadministration of Federal Funds

MADISON – The co-chairs of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) Senator Wimberger (R-Green Bay) and Representative Wittke (R-Racine) released the following statement prior to today’s Joint Legislative Audit Committee hearing:

“We’re seeing a trend of departments failing to provide proper checks and oversight while administering state programs. In the Department of Health Services’ case, the result is millions of taxpayer dollars being lost and hundreds of thousands of dollars potentially misappropriated. Recent audits have shown departments are making major decisions without any written policies, giving away funding through grants or projects without verifying taxpayers are actually getting what they paid for. I look forward to a productive conversation with DHS because Wisconsinites deserve to have confidence that our state’s programs are working for them,” said Senator Wimberger.

In 2022, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved a scope that directed the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) to look into the state’s administration of supplemental federal funding received in response to the COVID public health emergency. [Audit report 23-6](#) is one of multiple audits released by the LAB in response to this scope statement and is focused on the Provider Payment Program, Ventilator Stewardship Program and program integrity efforts conducted by DHS’s Office of the Inspector General. The Committee may also be reference report 23-4, the Single Audit, which found that DHS lost \$43 million without realizing it by paying a Medicare premium invoice when they already received an award reduction for the same amount.

Additionally, JLAC will take action to authorize two new audits on [Wisconsin State Capitol Police](#) and the [State Crime Laboratories](#) in the Department of Justice.

“An audit is a valuable tool for oversight when questions and concerns are brought to our attention. We have a responsibility to question and review programs, processes, staffing, efficiencies and more. In recent months and years, I’ve heard of delays in prosecutions due to long processing times at the state crime lab. Delays are costly. Delays keep people in jail longer, and certainly delays prolong justice for victims. Is it staffing? All too often the response to delay is “we don’t have staff”. Audits provide answers, and we need objective answers about all processes of the Division of Forensic Sciences/State Crime Lab,” said Representative Wittke.

Copies of LAB’s reports may be obtained from its website at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818. To report concerns related to state government activities, call LAB’s toll-free hotline at 1-877-FRAUD-17.

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