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Senator Tim Carpenter

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Sen. Carpenter Requests Legislative Audit of Michael Gableman's Commission

(MADISON)—Today, Senator Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) formally requested a legislative audit of the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) headed by Michael Gableman and issued the following statement:

“Today I requested that the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau perform an audit of the Office of Special Counsel which is conducting the \$676,000 investigation of the 2020 election headed by Michael Gableman. Little is known by the public or the legislature about the investigation’s true objective, the number of people on Gableman’s staff, and details about OSC’s accounting. The public needs to have confidence that that \$676,000 is not being wasted and that there is no questionable or illegal activity occurring at the OSC.

“The Office of Special Counsel was established by an obscure ballot in the Assembly Committee on Organization. There was no legislative resolution or bill to establish this office, and the language of that motion was not provided to the public transparently. The OSC is an unaccountable, rogue group of partisan actors operating without any known charter or formal objective. Exactly what value taxpayers are getting for their money is highly questionable.

“We know that this is not about finding widespread fraud. Gableman has already made up his mind even though investigations by the Legislative Audit Bureau, the bipartisan Wisconsin Elections Commission, and even the conservative group Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty have already found no widespread fraud.

“Nobody knows if the \$676,000 has already been spent. I’m asking the Legislative Audit Bureau to: determine if OSC has a list of expenses; identify the terms of the contract with Speaker Vos which was signed—and then an extension was made—verbally; whether OSC has entered into any other contracts; and what is the current balance of funds in OSC’s accounts. In addition, I requested that they determine why Gableman has already missed two deadlines for producing a report to the public about the investigation’s findings. We need to know how much longer this will go on before the public can see results or if Speaker Vos will write another almost-\$1 million check.

“I’m also requesting that Audit Bureau provide answers about Gableman’s staff. It hasn’t been disclosed how they were recruited and screened. All that is known at this time is that some have questionable backgrounds and credentials, biased views on elections, some believe in conspiracy theories, and at least one has shared racist content on social media.

“I trust that the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau can provide the transparency and accountability that the OSC has so far failed to provide to the people of Wisconsin. Only then can the taxpayers see whether their \$676,000 is being misused. Before another penny is given to Michael Gableman’s OSC, the public deserves to know if their tax dollars are being thrown down a conspiracy rabbit hole.”

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