



# JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE

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## Audit Highlights Delays at State Crime Lab

*Testing Takes 48% Longer Despite 13% Decline in Workload*

*New Law Requires Faster Processing of Sex Assault Kits starting July 1, 2024; Many Taking Months Longer*

**MADISON** – The co-chairs of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, Senator Eric Wimberger (R-Green Bay) and Representative Robert Wittke (R-Racine), shared their thoughts on the latest Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) report about the state's crime labs.

The [Legislative Audit Bureau's report 24-6](#) shows that even though there are **fewer requests for testing** at the state crime labs (down by 13.2%), the time it takes to complete these tests has increased by 48.7% since 2019-20 despite the labs having more staff and money. [16 recommendations to improve](#) the situation were offered in the report, such as setting productivity standards for analysts and improving how information is tracked and reported.

*“The delay is concerning,”* said Rep. Wittke. *“Even with fewer requests, the Department of Justice (DOJ) is taking almost 50% longer to complete tests.”* *“Furthermore, the absence of consistent and informed policy and procedure for staff is astounding. I hope the recommendations of the LAB are taken to heart by the DOJ,”* Wittke added.

**Starting July 1, a new law** requires sexual assault kits to be processed within six months. However, auditors found that of the 146 kits sent to private labs that then required further DOJ analysis, almost all took longer than six months, with a median processing time of 292 days.

*“This audit raises serious concerns about whether the DOJ can meet the new legal standards,”* said Sen. Wimberger. *“The DOJ isn’t including the time private labs spend on these kits in their reports, which makes their processing times look shorter than they really are.”*

### Key Findings from the Report:

- From 2019-20 to 2022-23, the number of test requests dropped by 13.2%, but the median time to complete them rose from 39 days to 58 days
- Less than half of the tests were completed within 60 days
- Under new law effective July 1, sex assault kits must be processed within six months, but 97.3% of 146 kits sent to private labs took longer
- Only 45.3% of sheriffs, police chiefs, and other users were satisfied with the lab's timeliness
- The labs received more staff and budget over the last three years but still have many vacant positions (9.5% vacancy rate as of July 2023)

For the full report, visit the Legislative Audit Bureau's website at [www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab](http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab) or call (608) 266-2818. Concerns related to state government activities can be reported to LAB's hotline at 1-877-FRAUD-17.