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For Immediate Release
February 28, 2007

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Joint Committee on Finance Approves Crime Lab Positions

Madison – The Joint Committee on Finance approved a measure today to eliminate the backlog of cases in the State Crime Lab, according to JFC Co-Chair, Representative Kitty Rhoades (Hudson).

“Crime victims and their families can finally breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the backlog at the State Crime Lab will be eliminated and justice will be served,” Rhoades stated.

The State Crime Lab is responsible for processing DNA and other evidence from crime scenes throughout the state. In recent years, a significant backlog has built up, leading to a delay in the prosecution of some criminals and calls for reform.

“Over the past few months, the extent of the backlog has become apparent and it became clear that significant action was needed to reduce and eliminate the backlog,” Rhoades said. “I am pleased that Attorney General Van Hollen was forthright with the Legislature on what was needed to eliminate the backlog.”

As part of their work on a budget repair bill, the committee approved 31 additional positions for the State Crime Lab in an effort to eliminate the significant backlog of cases that has plagued the lab in the past several years. It is estimated by the Attorney General’s Office, which oversees the State Crime Lab, that the additional positions will eliminate the backlog of cases within four years.

“The action taken today will address the backlog of over 1,800 cases statewide, including 8 cases in Pierce County and 10 cases in Saint Croix County,” Rhoades said. “With Republicans and Democrats working together in a bi-partisan manner we were able to tackle a problem that affects people in Western Wisconsin and every other part of the state.”

The motion to add the 31 additional positions passed with a unanimous vote.

“I am proud of the way the committee put aside partisan differences and worked together to solve one of the many pressing issues facing this great state,” Rhoades said. “I hope the spirit of cooperation continues as we work to craft the state budget.”

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