

# Reps Sargent and Berceau: King Audit, hearing highlight need for legislative oversight and accountability

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Madison, Wisconsin – Today the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (“Audit Committee”) held a public hearing on the results of the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB)’s audits (reports [17-8](#) and [17-14](#)) of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King (“King”), which is operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). State Representatives Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) and Terese Berceau (D-Madison), members of the Audit Committee, expressed their continued concerns about inaction at the DVA and demanded the Legislature act on the LAB’s audit recommendations.

“Between the LAB audits and today’s public hearing, it’s clear that without legislative oversight and enforcement, we’re going to be back here in two years having the same conversation we had today,” said Sargent, ranking Democratic Assembly member on the Audit Committee.

“Executive agencies need to respect the legislative process,” Sargent continued. “Complying with the Legislature isn’t optional—that’s how government works. Despite the Secretary’s unprofessional responses today, we’re not asking anything

extraordinary, we're asking for compliance with the LAB and the Audit Committee's requests. As far as I'm concerned, the audit results and Secretary Zimmerman's responses today are simply not good enough."

Today's public hearing comes only weeks after Governor Walker signed Wisconsin's 2017-19 biennial budget, vetoing key provisions that would have removed the DVA's unilateral authority to transfer money without legislative approval, promoted transparency and solvency for the veteran's trust fund, and required the DVA to implement the LAB's audit recommendations. Among many of the questions raised today related to DVA Secretary Daniel Zimmerman's status report that was due to the Audit Committee on September 1, 2017, which many legislators suggested did not address many of the LAB's recommendations.

"The DVA has given no indication it has meaningfully complied with the LAB's recommendations, and seemingly didn't understand the directives given in either audit, and the Secretary either could not or would not directly answer questions about it again today," said Berceau. "There's no shortage of concerns about what's happening at King. We have staffing concerns, morale concerns, and we're generating tens of millions in excess revenue, and the Legislature must take action to address this."

The DVA is expected to provide another status report to the Audit Committee in January of 2018.