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Gov. Walker: Appoints Cathy Jess to Serve as secretary of the Department of Corrections, thanks Jon Litscher for his many years of service to Wisconsin

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MADISON – Governor Scott Walker today announced the appointment of Cathy Jess to serve as secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC). Jess currently serves as deputy secretary of the agency.

“Cathy Jess is an experienced leader with a strong background, and we welcome her to this new role,” said Governor Walker. “I also give my deep appreciation and thanks to Jon Litscher for his outstanding work as DOC secretary and for his many years of dedicated service as a state official and educator. Jon is a consequential leader who brought about positive change and enacted numerous reforms that improved the department.”
Cathy Jess has served as deputy secretary of the DOC since February 2016. Jess previously served as the administrator of DOC’s Division of Adult Institutions from 2011 until her appointment as deputy secretary. Jess started her service with the DOC as a correctional officer at the Wisconsin Resource Center and proceeded to serve as warden at Dodge Correctional Institution, warden of the Wisconsin Women’s Correctional System, deputy warden at Waupun Correctional Institution, and deputy warden at Oshkosh Correctional Institution.

“From the time I started as a correctional officer more than 30 years ago, I’ve

always been extraordinarily proud of the Department of Correction's role in keeping the public safe," Jess said. "I look forward to working with Governor Walker to continue moving ahead on critical reforms."

Jon Litscher has served in Governor Walker's cabinet as secretary of the DOC since February 2016. Prior to becoming secretary, Litscher served most recently as the interim Superintendent at the Cambria-Friesland School District. He also served as the secretary of the DOC from 1999 – 2003, secretary of the Department of Employment Relations from 1991 – 1999, and executive secretary of the Higher Educational Aids Board from 1987 – 1990.

"I'm thankful to Governor Walker and to our Department employees for the privilege of serving as secretary these last two years," said Litscher. "I'm incredibly proud of what we have been able to accomplish during this time, including the transformation of juvenile corrections in Wisconsin, significant investments in reentry, mental health services, education, and vocational training, and reforms which have benefitted our staff."

Cathy Jess' first day as DOC secretary will be Monday, June 11.