

One Wisconsin Now: Records show Brad Schimel quick to buy promotional swag, slow to address growing delays at state crime lab

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Started Buying Swag in February 2015 But Waited Until June 2018 to Hire Contractor to Investigate Growing State Crime Lab Backlog

MADISON, Wis. — It only took mere weeks for Attorney General Brad Schimel to start using Department of Justice (DOJ) funds to purchase promotional swag like coffee mugs, golf towels, custom fortune cookies and commemorative coins. But according to [a news report](#) it was not until June 2018 that Schimel brought in a private contractor to identify the shortcomings in the state crime lab where waits for test results on evidence have nearly doubled.

"These growing delays at the state crime lab are another example of the mismanagement and incompetence we're getting from the state's top cop," commented One Wisconsin Now Research Director Joanna Beilman-Dulin. "Right after taking office Brad Schimel started spending DOJ money on swag like commemorative coins. But it took until just before his election for him to get around to trying to figure out why, on his watch, wait times for test results at the state crime lab have in some cases nearly doubled."

According to the Associated Press:

"Testing delays have dogged the labs for years as police submit more evidence in hopes of developing suspect DNA profiles and other leads. A DOJ report The Associated Press obtained through an open records request shows turnaround times for the testing of DNA, guns, tool marks and drug compositions have grown dramatically since Schimel took office in January 2015."

While Schimel has been slow to take action on delays at the state crime lab, Beilman-Dulin noted that he was quick to begin placing orders for promotional swag upon taking office. According to records obtained by One Wisconsin Now, on February 2, 2015, less than one month into his term, Schimel paid nearly \$1,400 for 150 stainless steel beverage tumblers.

Schimel since followed up with [numerous purchases of swag](#) totaling tens of thousands of dollars for items with questionable crime fighting uses including commemorative coins, fortune cookies with custom messages inside, jelly beans, coffee mugs, stress balls and more.

The Department of Justice has recently refused to fulfill One Wisconsin Now's request under the state open records law for updated information on purchases of promotional swag, claiming that reviewing the records would be too burdensome.

She concluded, "Brad Schimel's job as the head of the Department of Justice includes running the state crime lab, not overseeing a taxpayer funded gift shop."