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Rep. Sargent: WEDC Audit Reveals Continued Dereliction, Insubordination

Governor Walker agency continues economic discouragement and taxpayer dollar malfeasance

(MADISON) – Today State Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) voiced her outrage regarding the results of the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau's (LAB) [biennial audit of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation \(WEDC\)](#) (17-9), the results of which revealed Governor Walker's taxpayer-subsidized job agency has continued to be derelict in its duties to Wisconsin taxpayers.

"Not surprisingly, the audit released today is eerily similar to the audit released two years ago," said Rep. Sargent. "WEDC has proven time and again to be derelict in its duties to taxpayers and our state. There's no increased accountability or transparency—WEDC isn't collecting necessary information on tax credit applications, they're allowing more loan payment defaults, and they also can't substantiate any actual job creation numbers."

"This audit also highlights the disturbing reality that Governor Walker's administration continues to be willfully insubordinate and defiant to Wisconsin State Statutes and legislative intent," Sargent said.

"We've seen it with the DNR waste permit program, the DOT's State Highway Program, and now we've seen it twice with the WEDC. State agencies can't just opt out of complying with state statutes—that's not how government works. The executive branch and taxpayer-subsidized state actors should be held accountable, not only to the Legislature, but to Wisconsin taxpayers."

The LAB's audit also comes only weeks after Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee, knowing this biennium's WEDC audit would be forthcoming, voted to reinstate the WEDC's notoriously corrupt loan program, which had been shut down after [a 2015 audit](#) revealed WEDC had allowed businesses to receive taxpayer-subsidized business loans without demonstrating any actual job creation.

"This is the first WEDC audit since the last audit revealed corruption and malfeasance of taxpayer dollars, and yet Republicans still decided to reinstate WEDC's corrupt loan program despite not having any indication WEDC has addressed the alarming concerns raised two years ago. If that isn't the epitome of Republicans' continued commitment to give tax breaks their rich, corporate friends at the expense of Wisconsin taxpayers, I don't know what is."

"It's our job as legislators to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, and it is high time Republicans started taking this job seriously. WEDC is neither creating jobs nor saving them, so it's time we take a long, hard look at whether this agency should continue to exist."

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Melissa Sargent is a State Representative in the Wisconsin Assembly, representing the 48th Assembly District, which covers the east and north sides of the city of Madison and the village of Maple Bluff.