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**DOJ Neglect, Mishandling of Sexual Assault Kits Prompts Third Audit Request**

*Exposé released today highlighted alarming practices for sexual assault kit testing in Wisconsin*

MADISON –State Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) submitted an official request today to have the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) conduct an audit of the Wisconsin Department of Justice’s (DOJ) sexual assault kit backlog and kit testing processes and procedures. Sargent’s request comes in response to a *Post-Crescent* [article](#) published this morning detailing inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, and unresponsiveness at the DOJ and local agencies.

“Brad Schimel has been running from this problem for years--he spends half of his time claiming there is no mess, and the other half claiming he cleaned the mess up,” said Sargent, ranking Assembly Democratic member on the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which is charged with advising and directing the LAB to conduct audits of state programs. “If he won’t do his job, accept responsibility, or meaningfully address these problems, then the Legislature should do it for him.”

In a letter to Audit Committee Co-Chairs, Sargent asked that the LAB be directed to conduct a programmatic and performance audit of sexual assault kit testing protocols at the DOJ, as well as a financial audit of grant funding the Department has received to address the sexual assault kit backlog in Wisconsin. Sargent’s request today is the third time an official audit of sexual assault kit testing in Wisconsin has been requested—she also submitted two previous requests on February 7, 2017, and October 2, 2017, respectively, but those requests were never not acted upon by the Committee.

“This problem isn’t going away. The more we more we learn about how the Department has handled and *is* handling kit testing, the worse it gets,” continued Sargent. “It’s irresponsible to let this problem get any worse than it has under Schimel’s watch.”

“The Audit Committee and the LAB are uniquely situated to be able to evaluate, analyze, and give DOJ recommendations to improve, and we need to be willing to have honest, realistic conversations, not only to ensure this doesn’t get any worse, but to take the necessary steps to prevent it from ever getting to this point again in the future.”

Copies of Sargent’s previous requests and correspondence with the Wisconsin DOJ relating to sexual assault kit testing can be found [here](#).

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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.*