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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 11, 2018

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Can't pay back \$1 million loan? WEDC says 'No worries' *Walker's troubled job agency leaves taxpayers with the bill, again*

MADISON, WI – Amid concerns with Gov. Walker's inability to enforce job creation contracts, observers are questioning the latest move by the Walker administration to write off a \$1.1 million debt owed by a businessman convicted of fraud. The unpaid debt stems from a risky loan provided by Walker's jobs agency in 2011 to Green Box LLC and its owner Ron Van Den Heuvel. The funds were supposed to be used to create 116 jobs, but records show Van Den Heuvel used the taxpayer-funded loan to pay down personal debts, travel to Las Vegas, and purchase Green Bay Packers tickets, golf memberships and a new Cadillac Escalade.

"After six years of mismanagement, damning audits and unbelievable scandals, Gov. Walker and his administration have yet to prove they can be responsible with public dollars," said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). "This was a bad loan that should have never been awarded in the first place. Despite repeated promises to recoup financial losses and correct these glaring problems, Gov. Walker is letting a convicted con artist off the hook for money that is legally owed to taxpayers."

Audits have revealed that Gov. Walker's Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) "did not report accurate information on the number of jobs created and retained as a result of its programs." It also found that the potentially uncollectable balance of loans with repayments more than 90 days past due increased nearly tenfold between 2015 and 2017, from \$1.3 million to \$11 million. Democratic efforts to increase transparency, accountability and oversight of the troubled agency have been repeatedly blocked by Republican lawmakers.

"Given WEDC's tumultuous history and their latest inability to enforce contracts, I'm not convinced that this administration is able to protect taxpayers and hold Foxconn accountable," said Shilling. "The cost to taxpayers has already increased 50 percent in the few short months since Foxconn was announced and the project has changed significantly from the original agreement last fall. I have serious concerns Foxconn's reputation for abandoning projects and failing to deliver on their promises will leave taxpayers footing the bill again."

It is unknown what steps Gov. Walker and his WEDC will take to enforce potential contract violations after recent [reports](#) revealed Foxconn's abrupt change of plans to build a smaller facility than originally promised. Foxconn is the largest state taxpayer giveaway to a foreign corporation in U.S. history. In less than a year, the public cost of this project has increased from an original estimate of \$3 billion to over \$4.5 billion.

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