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Audit of Walker jobs agency intensifies Foxconn concerns

Troubled jobs agency remains unable to verify job numbers

MADISON, WI – An audit of Gov. Walker’s troubled jobs agency has uncovered significant accounting problems and ongoing management issues. Since Gov. Walker and Republican lawmakers formed the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation in 2011, the agency has been plagued by scandals, mismanagement and economic disappointment. Wisconsin has trailed the nation in job creation every single quarter for 23 consecutive quarters and has ranked dead last nationally in start-up businesses for the past three years.

After the Joint Legislative Audit Committee reviewed the audit findings, Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse) released the following statement:

“If there’s anything we’ve learned from the years of damning audits and scandals at Gov. Walker’s jobs agency, it’s that WEDC is incapable of overseeing the \$3 billion corporate giveaway to Foxconn. For the past six years, Gov. Walker’s administration hasn’t been able to track job numbers or prevent tax dollars from going to companies that have outsourced Wisconsin jobs. Despite these glaring problems, Republicans want to put put this troubled agency in charge of the largest taxpayer funded giveaway to a foreign corporation in U.S. history. I’m not convinced by any stretch of the imagination that this administration is able to protect taxpayers and hold corporations accountable when they outsource jobs.”

The audit revealed that “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 2015-2017 from \$1.3 million to \$11 million. Democratic efforts to increase transparency, accountability and oversight of the troubled agency continue to be blocked by Republican lawmakers.

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