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December 7, 2010

Mr. Reggie Bicha, Secretary
Department of Children and Families
201 East Washington Avenue, Second Floor
P.O. Box 8196
Madison, WI 53708-8196

Dear Secretary Bicha:

We are writing on behalf of the Wisconsin Legislative Council's Special Committee on Public Assistance Program Integrity. The Special Committee is charged with studying current laws, rules, and policies relating to fraud prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution, and the current fraud penalty structure, in public assistance programs under ch. 49, Stats.

The Special Committee will submit proposed legislation to the Joint Legislative Council with the purpose of strengthening the program integrity of Wisconsin's public assistance programs. To further enhance that goal, the Special Committee also recommends that the Department of Children and Families take the following steps:

- Collaborate with other state agencies, agencies in neighboring states, and local prosecutors to strengthen mechanisms for information sharing to facilitate fraud identification and investigation.
- Conduct a review of the department's forms and program materials to identify any questions or formats prone to applicant or participant error.
- In addition to investigating fraud, focus on the front-end verification of participants' eligibility for public assistance programs administered by the department.
- Increase the amount of training provided to local agency staff in areas related to program integrity, for example by providing training to employees responsible for identifying fraud and overpayments.

Thank you in advance for your diligent attention to these measures.

We also wish to extend our thanks for the assistance the department has provided to the Special Committee throughout its deliberations.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our offices or the Legislative Council staff.

Sincerely,

Senator Bob Jauch, Chair
Special Committee on Public Assistance
Program Integrity

Representative Gordon Hintz, Vice-Chair
Special Committee on Public Assistance
Program Integrity

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