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Walker's Mental Health Complex Report Cover Up

Walker Admits Not Reading Report about Tragedy; Supports Outside Legal Counsel Decision Withholding Report from His Own County Auditors

Madison – Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker admitted in a newspaper story today he was unaware of a comprehensive report on the tragedies at the Milwaukee County mental health complex – but that has not stopped him from refusing to release the report to his own county auditors. Walker refused to tell the private legal counsel he hired, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to taxpayers, to release the report to Milwaukee County auditors who have requested it to complete their investigation.

“It is hard to know which is worse – Walker’s dereliction of duty or the cover up,” said Scot Ross, One Wisconsin Now Executive Director. “Despite deaths, assaults and abuse at the mental health complex he operates, Walker is so busy running for governor he won’t even read the report, let alone act on it.”

In a story published today, Walker told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* he did not know the report existed until recently, and still does not know its contents.

“Walker is spending over \$200,000 in taxpayer funds for outside legal counsel about the deaths, assaults and abuse at his own mental health complex, and can’t even find the time to be briefed on a report about the complex,” said Ross. “Scott Walker’s cover up of this report is appalling and outrageous.”

Under Walker’s mismanagement 67 sexual assaults have been committed at the center, a patient died of starvation and a security guard, hired as part of Walker’s privatization schemes, sexually assaulted a patient. Walker also defended the practice of housing dangerous and violent male patients along with female patients. [*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 12/24/06, 4/26/10, 5/9/10, 5/10/10; *WISN-TV*, 5/18/10]

When confronted with overwhelming evidence that mismanagement was responsible for these tragedies, Walker refused to fire the administrator in charge of the center, choosing instead to reassign him at a six-figure salary and benefit package.

With Walker spending the majority of his tenure as Milwaukee County Executive running twice for governor, he has put patients at risk in order to pander to Republican Party bosses by slashing badly-needed public positions. At the beginning of Walker’s tenure, there were nearly 1,000 positions for the Behavioral Health Division – a figure which has been cut by 25 percent. [Milwaukee County Budget, Behavioral Health Division]

Walker hired a private lawyer at \$395-an-hour from the Reinhart law firm in Milwaukee, which has donated over \$22,000 to his campaigns since he became County Executive. The legal tab has risen to nearly \$240,000. [Wisconsin Government Accountability Board; Wisconsin Democracy Campaign; *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 8/21/10, 9/23/10]

“Scott Walker wants this potentially-explosive report withheld simply to protect his political hide,” said Ross. “Withholding this report only keeps the public in the dark about what went on at Scott Walker’s mental health complex.”

For more information on Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker’s record of failure and mismanagement, visit: www.ScottWalkerFailureFiles.com.