

Walker's WEDC: Party Up Front, Business in the Back

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Melissa Baldauff
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MADISON - Scott Walker's Economic Disaster Corporation was supposed to be the state's flagship jobs agency, but as Wisconsin ranks dead last – 10th out of 10 states – in the Midwest on job creation, WEDC is more known for scandals than creating jobs.

In 2013, a scathing audit from the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau found that the unaccountable agency was plagued by a lack of oversight, to include improper expenditures by WEDC employees on items ranging from Badgers football tickets to iTunes gift cards and alcoholic beverages.

WEDC also had to be reimbursed for travel and meals for family of the agency's head that had been charged to agency credit cards.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported that Republican state Sen. Robert Cowles, co-chairman on the Legislative Audit Committee, said of the audit:

"I hope they can get their act together, but this is pretty darn bad. I'd say the jury is out whether this was a good idea to create this whole entity . . . I don't think there can be any more excuses. They've got to fix this thing."

More than a year later? We still don't know whether WEDC has fixed all the problems from the audit. But we do know that the most recent federal jobs data shows Wisconsin lagging behind the rest of the nation and our neighbors as we rank dead last -- 10th out of 10 states -- in the Midwest and 35th in the nation overall on job creation. Meanwhile, the entrepreneurship organization the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation shows Wisconsin continues to rank among the worst-performing states for entrepreneurship, 46th out of the 50 states.

"It sounds like a party at Walker's Economic Disaster Corporation, but with Wisconsin ranked dead last in the Midwest on job creation there's nothing to celebrate," Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Mike Tate said Monday.

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