Oversight in the News

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- After years of conspiracism, Assembly elections committee finds new spirit of bipartisanship (Wisconsin Examiner, 6/6/2023)
  - The Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections, previously known for its partisan divide and promotion of election conspiracy theories, has shown a new spirit of bipartisanship. The committee, now led by Rep. Scott Krug, held a public hearing on four bipartisan bills aimed at enhancing the state's election systems, emphasizing the security and integrity of Wisconsin's elections while seeking areas for improvement that both parties can agree on. Three of the bills—AB 298, AB 283, and AB 282—received bipartisan support, addressing issues such as preventing the closure of too many polling places shortly before an election, reimbursing municipalities for the costs of special elections, and requiring the archiving of live-streamed election canvasses.

- Assembly elections committee gets clerks' views on election law changes (Wisconsin Examiner, 9/21/2023)
  - The Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections held an informational hearing to gather input from county and municipal clerks on improving the state's election systems.

The committee, chaired by Rep. Scott Krug, emphasized bipartisanship and sought areas of agreement in election law, moving away from the partisan and conspiracy-driven approach of his predecessor. Clerks from Dane, Marathon, Rock, and Waukesha counties, along with municipal clerks and an expert from the National Conference of State Legislatures, participated in the dialogue. The clerks highlighted the need for flexibility in election administration, given the diverse needs of urban and rural areas.

- WI lawmakers look into prison oversight (The 715 Newsroom, 6/7/2024)
  - Wisconsin lawmakers are examining the state's prison oversight mechanisms following reports of mismanagement and abuse within the corrections system, considering the establishment of an independent oversight board to monitor prison conditions and operations, and seeking to address systemic issues that have led to a lack of accountability and transparency in the state's penal institutions.

- Wisconsin Supreme Court Limits Legislature's Authority To Block Governor (Urban Milwaukee, 7/7/2024)
  - The Wisconsin Supreme Court has issued a 6-1 ruling that limits the Legislature's authority to block actions taken by Governor Tony Evers. The decision states that legislative committees, such as the Joint Finance Committee, violated the separation of powers by blocking the Department of Natural Resources from acquiring land for conservation using funds already allocated by the Legislature. The court's ruling is seen as a major victory for Governor Evers, who filed a lawsuit arguing that such actions by the committee infringed on executive power. The decision emphasizes the importance of maintaining the separation of powers to preserve liberty and government accountability. Governor Evers celebrated the ruling as a "victory for the people of Wisconsin," while the Joint Finance Committee co-chairs expressed disappointment, stating that the decision removes legislative oversight and jeopardizes the stewardship program. The ruling is expected to have broad implications for state agencies, with the potential release of funds for education and environmental cleanup.

- Short on fixes for prison problems, Wisconsin weighs proposals for independent oversight (PBS Wisconsin, 9/16/2024)
  - Wisconsin is considering proposals for an independent ombudsman to oversee prison conditions, prompted by concerns about overcrowding, understaffing, and abuses in the state's

correctional facilities. Prison reform advocates argue that independent oversight could address grievances more effectively than the current Department of Corrections system. Legislators from both parties have expressed interest, but funding and staffing challenges remain obstacles to implementing the proposal.

- Wisconsin Supreme Court rules against state legislature's ability to block state rules (MSN, 7/8/2025)
  - The Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the Legislature cannot suspend administrative rules from state agencies. The Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules violated the constitutional duty of the legislature for bicameralism and presentment. The decision stemmed from two challenges brought by the governor.

- Wisconsin Republican leaders, Evers battle over rulemaking authority (The Center Square, 8/22/2025)
  - Following a recent Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling limiting the authority of the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules, Gov. Tony Evers directed state agencies to move forward with rulemaking without waiting for legislative committee review. Republican legislative leaders, including Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate President Mary Felzkowski, criticized the move as bypassing established oversight and undermining public input. The court ruling affirmed that while the Legislature's past actions overstepped, it retains constitutional authority to revise the administrative rulemaking process.

- Bills aim to address 'inhumane' conditions in Wisconsin prisons and jails (News From The States, 11/11/2025)
  - Wisconsin lawmakers introduced a package of bills aimed at addressing reported inhumane conditions in state prisons and jails, following oversight hearings and public testimony on facility conditions. The legislation includes proposals for independent oversight, limits on solitary confinement, and enhanced health care standards. Supporters cited findings from past legislative audits and investigations highlighting deficiencies in correctional oversight and inmate treatment.

- Sen. LeMahieu: State Senate announces Special Committee on Oversight of the Wisconsin Department of Justice (WisPolitics, 12/15/2025)

- The Wisconsin State Senate has established a special committee to oversee the Wisconsin Department of Justice. According to Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, the committee will examine the department’s practices, transparency, and accountability, particularly in areas involving law enforcement and legal decision-making. The committee is expected to begin its work in early 2026 and will include members from both parties.