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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel & Bipartisan AG Coalition Urges Congress to Help Protect
Employees from Sexual Harassment**

MADISON, Wis. – Today, in a letter to Congress, Attorney General Brad Schimel and a bipartisan coalition of 56 states and territories urged Congress to end secret, forced arbitration in cases of workplace sexual harassment. Too often employees are required to sign employment contracts containing arbitration agreements mandating that sexual harassment claims be resolved through private arbitration instead of the judicial process. The secrecy surrounding these proceedings can protect serial violators and provide inadequate relief to victims.

“Every citizen in this country has a right to access our judicial system, and forced arbitration in employee contracts across the country denies them that right,” said Attorney General Schimel. “If we are to provide justice to victims, Congress needs to pass this legislation. Victims have a right to their day in court.”

The attorneys general letter, which was sent Monday to leaders in the United States House of Representative and the United States Senate, asks Congress to pass appropriately-tailored legislation to ensure that sexual harassment victims have a right to their day in court.

“Congress today has both opportunity and cause to champion the rights of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace by enacting legislation to free them from the injustice of forced arbitration and secrecy when it comes to seeking redress from egregious misconduct condemned by all concerned Americans,” states the letter.

In addition to Wisconsin, attorneys general from all 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and five U.S. territories joined the letter: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii,

Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Washington, D.C., American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Attorney General Brad Schimel has made supporting victims of sexual assault one of his top priorities. Under Attorney General Schimel's administration, DOJ has reformed sexual assault response protocols, advocated for legislation that protects survivors, trained communities to respond to sexual assault with a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach, and championed the testing of previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits in Wisconsin.

In 2015, Attorney General Schimel directed the Wisconsin Department of Justice Bureau of Human Resource Services to reform anti-harassment and discrimination training at the agency, and the agency took the following steps:

- Executive staff all received harassment prevention training in April 2015;
- Mandatory harassment/respectful workplace training for all supervisors in May and June 2015;
- Mandatory sensitivity and anti-harassment training for all DOJ staff in August and September 2015;
- DOJ updated its harassment and discrimination prevention policy in March 2016;
- Mandatory harassment training for all DOJ supervisor and managers was held in April, May, and July 2016;
- All new DOJ employees receive information about the policy on their first day of orientation;
- In October 2017, DOJ started an additional, quarterly orientation as a full day follow up for all new employees from the quarter to further expand on information for new employees, which includes training on harassment and discrimination prevention.

A copy of the letter is attached.