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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Kaul Moves for Temporary Restraining Order To Stop Mass Firings and Seek Reinstatement of Federal Probationary Employees

MADISON – Attorney General Josh Kaul joined a coalition of 20 attorneys general that moved for a temporary restraining order for numerous federal agencies, asking that a federal court order them to cease the illegal mass layoffs of federal probationary employees, and to reinstate those who have been fired.

“With its unlawful mass firings of probationary federal employees, the Trump administration has undermined important services and carelessly upended the lives of veterans, scientists, and many other public servants,” said AG Kaul. “These workers’ rights should be protected, and the Trump administration should be required to follow the law.”

In an effort to dramatically reduce the size of the federal government, the Trump administration initiated mass terminations of federal employees, ordering numerous federal agencies to fire thousands of probationary employees. These personnel are newly hired or have recently been promoted or changed offices, and they are generally subject to a probationary period of one or two years before they are entitled to full protections under federal employment laws.

While federal agencies claimed, in the form of termination letters, that these probationary employees were fired for unsatisfactory performance or conduct, the firings were actually part of the administration’s attempt to restructure and downsize the entire federal government. In the lawsuit filed today, the coalition of attorneys general claims that the administration was therefore required to follow federal laws and regulations that govern large-scale federal “Reductions in Force” (RIF). These

critical protections ensure that personnel such as military veterans are given preference in retaining their jobs.

When a RIF results in a layoff of 50 or more employees, the agency must generally give at least 60 days' advance notice to states governments, so they can provide vital "rapid response" information, resources, and services to affected workers. The federal agencies named in the lawsuit failed to provide any advance notice to Wisconsin.

In today's motion, AG Kaul is seeking an immediate ruling by the Court to:

- Reinstatement unlawfully fired employees;
- Stop further similar terminations; and
- Identify affected employees

Joining AG Kaul in the coalition are the attorneys general of Maryland, Minnesota, the District of Columbia, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawai'i, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont.