

## **Irene Wrenner Comments on BAA**

Thank you for this opportunity. My suggestion grows out of the widespread lack of oversight and accountability that I witnessed as a State Senator these past two years.

As a member of the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee (JITOC), I was presented with a dilemma: Should members allow nearly \$12 M to be spent on the first implementation step of a poorly-planned project?

That project may cost upwards of \$200 M to complete, according to some knowledgeable state employees. Other staff are estimating it will cost at least \$139 M.

I voted NO on releasing that money because a trusted JFO-contractor and IT specialist reviewed the project and rated it POOR or WEAK on 7 of 8 measures.

The other JITOC members, with one absent, voted to release \$11.8 M anyway.

That money would be used to pay a firm named GuideHouse to stand up the Workday software and propel the project of an Enterprise Resource Planning System forward. GuideHouse would not, however, assure anyone that the system would meet Vermont's needs at the end of their contract.

Workday is cloud-based, AI-centered software which would replace existing, dependable financial management systems used by at least five departments or agencies of Vermont's executive branch.

Management has stated the currently-used systems are at end-of-life.

On the contrary, programmers tell me, we need only spend a couple million dollars on upgrades. Then, we'll be in compliance without the distraction and waste of a \$200 M boondoggle.

I am here to ask you to add language to the BAA to pause the signing of a contract with GuideHouse, before it begins work as the state's so-called Preferred Implementation Vendor. Such a contract execution is imminent, and the BAA is the fastest-moving bill to which such language could be added.

Your legislative peers – including the Institutions and IT Committee in the Senate, and the Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee in the House – as well as the State Auditor, need more time to determine whether this \$200 M expenditure has met statutory planning requirements. In short, is this a prudent use of that much money?

Given the state's dire need to reduce the tax burden on our residents, that would be time well spent. Thank you for your consideration.