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**Auditor's Letter to General Assembly Requests  
Funding for Accountability, Transparency**

RALEIGH, NC – June 5, 2007

Today, State Auditor Leslie Merritt delivered a letter to North Carolina State Senators and Representatives warning that several items contained in the Governor's budget and House Appropriations Act, but removed from the Senate's version, would cut the Auditor's effectiveness and efficiency in providing oversight of State government spending if not restored.

"I support the General Assembly in their attempt to control spending, but cost-cutting the accountability mechanism in State government contradicts ethics reform and recent mandates to monitor state grants," said State Auditor Leslie Merritt.

If the \$230,000 remains in the \$20 billion budget, it would fund projects like building a database to identify conflicts of interests in State grant recipients, and fund more audit reviews like the Auditor's review of DMV that discovered 27,000 NC driver's licenses based on invalid and potentially fraudulent Social Security numbers.

"My auditors make sure that taxpayer funded services reach their intended recipients and State grants are being spent as they were intended," said State Auditor Leslie Merritt. "Grants are left unmonitored and spending is left unaccounted for when auditors are denied the technology and personnel needed to get their jobs done," Merritt concluded.

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