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Governor Walker uses juveniles and state employees as pawns in campaign gimmick

MADISON – Today, Governor Scott Walker finally joined the call for closing the Lincoln Hills juvenile facility. Coming six years after his office was alerted to serious issues, the plan calls for the facilities to close in 2019. The facility is currently under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and recent reports reveal that both the safety of juveniles and staff are at risk in this under-resourced facility.

“Governor Walker has systemically failed the juveniles and staff members at Lincoln Hills with incompetent leadership and serious understaffing,” said Rep. Chris Taylor. “Democrats have put forth solutions for years that would ensure the safety and humane treatment of everyone at the facility – those proposals have been consistently ignored by Republican legislators and the Walker Administration.”

Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and Rep. Chris Taylor (D-Madison) have called for the closure of this facility in its current capacity as a juvenile detention facility. Assembly Bill 802 requires that Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake be closed within one year after the bill is signed into law. It also requires the Department of Corrections (DOC), in consultation with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to create a plan to establish regional juvenile correctional facilities and submit the plan to the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) within six months after the bill is signed into law. AB 802 also leaves open the possibility for the facility to be used for other corrections purposes. This bill is just one of many Democratic solutions for humanely treating juveniles and creating a safe work environment.

Governor Walker’s plan comes as he faces reelection in the fall and days after the former Department of Corrections Secretary leveled accusations of neglect against his Administration, including that Attorney General Brad Schimel had “completely botched” the initial probe.