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## **Youth Justice Milwaukee Statement on the Juvenile Justice Budget Decisions before the Joint Committee on Finance**

[Youth Justice Milwaukee \(YJM\)](#) has reviewed the budget papers for the 2019-21 biennial state budget to determine the courses of action for each item that we believe will produce the best comparative outcomes to reduce harm to children, families, and communities around the state.

Youth Justice Milwaukee has chosen to make its recommendations public to raise the level of awareness about the future direction of youth justice in Wisconsin. For the past several months, as lawmakers have held public listening sessions and debated the state budget, the voices of the most vulnerable stakeholders in the youth justice system were not included.

"Decision-makers must understand how critical it is to have ongoing meaningful input from the people who are most impacted by the justice system to make informed decisions that will affect thousands of people for generations to come," said Sharlen Moore, Co-founder of Youth Justice Milwaukee.

YJM urges lawmakers to work across party lines to prevent and divert children from entering the justice system by investing in effective, community-based services. Research conclusively demonstrates that incarceration increases violence and recidivism (re-offense) among children. The people of Wisconsin cannot afford to continue to waste money and lives on a failed model.

Recommendations:

[Paper #251 2017 Act 185 \(Corrections -- Juvenile Corrections\)](#)

***YJM is in favor of Alternative C. 1.*** "A. C. Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake Closing Date 1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to allow Corrections to transfer juveniles as soon as a substitute placement that meets the needs of the juvenile are ready. Further, close Lincoln Hills once all juveniles are transferred to SRCC's or a new state facility."



***If this is not possible due to lack of support, YJM is in favor of Alternative C. 4.*** "4. Take no action."

**It is not acceptable to select the second alternative, which would extend the closure of the two prisons by a full 18 months to July 1, 2022.**

[Paper #255 Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center -- Expansion and Funding Transfer from DOC \(Corrections -- Juvenile Corrections\)](#)

***YJM is in favor of Alternative A. 3.*** "A. Funding and Positions for Initial Expansion 3. Take no action. Repeal statutory provisions enacted as part of Act 185 that require DHS to expand MJTC by not less than 29 beds."

***If this is not possible due to lack of support, YJM is in favor of Alternative A. 2.*** "2. Modify the Governor's recommendation by reducing funding by \$514,400 PR and position authority by 8.0 PR positions in 2020-21 to provide a total of \$2,645,000 PR and 42.5 positions in 2020-21 for unit staff for a 14-bed expansion of MJTC, but no positions and funding for additional program staff for future expansion of MJTC. Repeal statutory provisions enacted as part of Act 185 that require DHS to expand MJTC by not less than 29 beds."

[Paper #211 Cost Reimbursement for Establishing Secured Residential Care Centers](#)

***YJM is in favor of Alternative A. 1.*** "A. SRCC Start-up Cost Reimbursement 1. Approve the Governor's proposal to create a new annual sum certain GPR appropriation to reimburse counties for the for one-time start-up costs incurred by counties to establish SRCCs and provide funding of \$3,500,000 GPR in 2020-21."

***YJM is in favor of Alternative B. 2.*** "B. Youth Aids SRCC Bonus Payments 2. Modify the bill to provide \$750,000 GPR in 2020-21 in order to fund youth aids bonuses for qualifying counties that operate a SRCC."

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*[Youth Justice Milwaukee](#) is a broad-based campaign advocating for community-based, family-centered, restorative programs as an alternative to locking up children in Wisconsin's youth prisons. Youth Justice Milwaukee represents a coalition of persons who were incarcerated as youth, families of youth who are or were incarcerated, service providers, and local and national youth justice advocates.*