



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

July 29, 2020

The Honorable Chief U.S. District Judge James D. Peterson
U.S. District Court
Western District of Wisconsin
120 North Henry Street, Room 320
Madison, WI 53703

Honorable Judge Peterson,

We would like to invite you to join us on a tour of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools for juveniles this coming fall.

In July of 2017, you issued an order in the case of former inmates at the facilities represented by the American Civil Liberties Union vs. Lincoln Hills, Copper Lake and Department of Corrections officials. The order instituted drastic reforms in permissible disciplinary actions and changed the procedures of operations at the schools. We respect that the ruling made at the time was done so to protect the rights and safety of the inmates housed at the facilities.

As is the case with all complex decisions, unintended consequences are unavoidable. Restrictions stemming from the federal decree, compounded by other factors, have caused Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake to deteriorate into an unstable and traumatizing workplace. The pandemic only exacerbated the difficulties there, with programming pauses and staff turnover contributing to an explosion of violent activity in 2020. In a petition of “No Confidence against all Administration of Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake and the Department of Juvenile Corrections” union employees expressed that in the last six months of 2020, compared to the first six months of the year: staff injury went up 4700%, youth/staff battery went up 117%, sexual misconduct went up 75%, and use of force incidences went up 58%. We urge you to join us on a visit to the facilities and speak with the staff there about their day-to-day experience working under the federal decree.

On behalf of Wisconsin’s citizens, we thank you for your public service to our state and to our country. We know the decisions you make are solicitous and studied, and that working in the judicial branch of our government takes a noble individual with a passion for helping our society.

We hope you will join us this fall and look forward to hearing from your office.

Sincerely,



Sen. Mary Felzkowski
12th Senate District



Rep. Calvin Callahan
35th Assembly District



Sen. Van Wanggaard
21st Senate District



Rep. Michael Schraa
53rd Assembly District



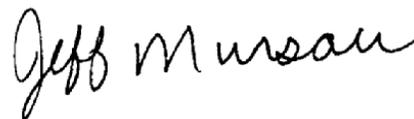
Sen. Jerry Petrowski
29th Senate District



Rep. Patrick Snyder
85th Assembly District



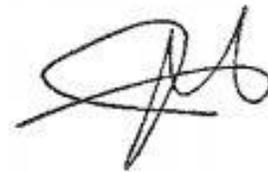
Sen. Howard Marklein
17th Senate District



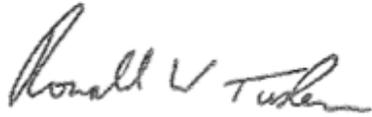
Rep. Jeff Mursau
36th Assembly District



Rep. Samba Baldeh
48th Assembly District



Rep. John Spiros
86th Assembly District



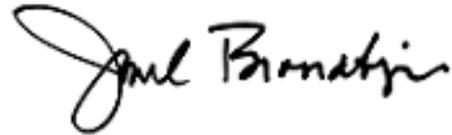
Rep. Ron Tusler
3rd Assembly District



Rep. Paul Tittel
25th Assembly District



Rep. Cabral-Guevara
55th Assembly District



Rep. Janel Brandtjen
22nd Assembly District

CC:

Representative Thomas Tiffany
1714 Longworth House Office Building
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