



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Reps. Bowen and Brostoff: Response to Gov. Walker’s comments on opening a Milwaukee-based youth correctional facility**

MILWAUKEE – Last week, Governor Walker made comments that he is willing to work with Milwaukee elected officials on a local juvenile corrections facility. Representatives David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) and Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee), released the following statements in response:

“It is a small step in the right direction that Governor Walker has indicated a willingness to work with Milwaukee area stakeholders on new local strategy rather than continuing the trend of sending struggling youth over 200 miles away,” said Rep. Bowen, a member of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and former program manager at Urban Underground, a local nonprofit focused on encouraging young leaders to develop safe communities.

“Any new investment into reforming the youth justice system should focus overwhelmingly on creating new restorative spaces where young people can be treated and rehabilitated rather than continuing the failed status quo that prioritizes incarceration over restoration,” Bowen said. “I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss local alternatives with the governor and I hope he will join us in developing a new, 21<sup>st</sup> century model of youth restoration.”

Over a year ago, stories broke in statewide media about state, and shortly after, federal, investigations into allegations of systemic abuse at the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake institutions in northern Wisconsin. Since, Milwaukee area elected officials have repeatedly called for public hearings on the crisis and for the immediate return of Milwaukee area youth – calls that have been all but ignored by the Republican majority.

“I’m glad that the Governor is finally taking this issue seriously and considering what many experts have called for repeatedly – keep our children closer to home while putting a stop to the abuses they have endured at the existing facility,” Rep. Brostoff said. “We’ve seen the failure of these sorts of punitive jailing facilities while also seeing the successes of investing in preventative measures. I hope we can work together to help elevate our youth into better circumstances.”

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