



# SENATOR LENA TAYLOR

*a Champion for...*

[www.LenaTaylor.org](http://www.LenaTaylor.org)

## *Juvenile Justice*

### **Lena's Work with Juvenile Justice**

#### **Call for a Special Session on Juvenile Justice**

In response to the crisis at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, Lena called on Governor Scott Walker to hold a special session to reform Wisconsin's juvenile corrections system. She asked for the following bills to be on the agenda: (link to video:

<http://bit.ly/24ncSPb>).

#### **Moving Juvenile Corrections to the Department of Children and Families**

In an effort to encourage Wisconsin to treat its juvenile inmates less like delinquent teenagers, Lena has proposed that juvenile corrections be transferred from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Children and Families. Just like adults, when kids make mistakes, they need to pay their debt to society. However, Lena believes that we must remember that at the end of the day, they are children. Their brains haven't fully developed, and they may have had troubled childhoods that led them to become troubled youth. Lena believes that if we treat juvenile inmates less like hardened criminals, we would get better results. ([SB 804](#))

#### **Ending Solitary Confinement for Juveniles**

Lena's bill SB 803 would eliminate the use of punitive solitary confinement for juveniles. In light of what we now know about the effect of solitary confinement on an individual's mental health, Lena believes that placing young people in solitary cannot be justified except to protect the safety of other kids in the facility. These kids are in our care to get better, not worse. ([SB 803](#))

*"It doesn't matter if you have been convicted of a crime or not; everyone deserves to be safe, especially when they are in the care of the state."*

*--- Senator Lena Taylor*



*Lena in Corrections Committee,  
working to ensure your rights.*

## Moving 17-year-olds to Juvenile Court

Teenagers who are not legally recognized as adults are often sentenced as adults by our justice system, imposing harsh sentences that affect them throughout their lives. Lena's bill would make it so anyone under 18 who is a first time non-violent offender would go through our Juvenile Justice System.

## Trauma Informed Care

At the confirmation hearing for newly-appointed Department of Corrections Secretary Jon Litscher, Lena stressed the importance of a trauma-informed care approach for the inmates at Lincoln Hills. She has asked for increased funding and staff for facilities to enable them to better recognize the trauma of juvenile inmates and deliver more effective treatment. She also advocated for more artistic outlets to help kids with their trauma.

## Bringing Kids Back to Milwaukee

It took Lena four hours to drive to Lincoln Hills, where over one-hundred of the inmates were from Milwaukee. Lena has called for an expansion of community-based alternative programs for juvenile inmates to keep them closer to home, as well as more community sponsored visits from Milwaukee to Lincoln Hills to make it easier for parents to contact and visit with their children.

## Visit to Lincoln Hills

- As part of her work to ensure our justice system treats inmates with respect and dignity, Lena visited the Lincoln Hills Detention Center in January. Showing her commitment to the investigations of abuse and violations at the center, she spoke with the kids and listened to their stories and concerns firsthand. She was joined in January by Senator Harris-Dodd, faith and community leaders, and family members of inmates. When a juvenile is incarcerated, they are removed from their families and their communities, which can cause a huge sense of hopelessness. By hosting visits similar to this one, Lena believes that we can restore hope in these youth with the power of love and faith.

*Lena busy at work advocating for our community's children.*



- In February, Lena organized another visit to celebrate Black History Month. In this visit, she brought American Legacy's "Know Your History" Mobile Truck Exhibit on a three-day tour throughout Wisconsin. The truck is a traveling museum filled with photos, stories, and interactive learning stations to celebrate African-American history and educate young inmates, many of whom are African-American.
- Community-based visits to our juvenile correctional facilities have shown to be successful, and that is why Lena is calling for more visits. In a recent meeting with Secretary Jon Litscher, Lena emphasized the need for more visits. Moving forward, Lena plans to have a monthly, if not biweekly, visit to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. In these visits, she would like to bring a range of activities that will promote team-building with art therapy, STEM projects, career planning and goal setting, and so much more.

**Experienced Leader who fights for liberty and justice for all.**

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