



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

February 7, 2017

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI, 53707

Dear Gov. Walker,

Last year, I wrote a letter on April 25, 2016 asking you to call a special session of the Legislature to address the escalating crisis at Lincoln Hills School and Copper Lake School juvenile correctional institutions. Last month, you called a special session to address the opioid epidemic. To date, my request for a special session has gone unanswered, yet these issues continue to persist. The emergency at Lincoln Hills is as deserving of your attention as the opioid crisis, and we need to address it now.

While you were non-responsive to my last request, the crisis at Lincoln Hills has reached devastating levels. For two years, these institutions have been under federal investigation for child abuse and neglect, and now they're involved in two lawsuits. The urgency of this situation cannot be understated.

We clearly need to invest in better alternatives. I have been so impressed with the work of the Department of Correction's Grow Academy, which uses agriculture and sustainability as a tool to help reform youth and put them on a path to successful reentry into their community. It's a model that works and something that we should replicate in Milwaukee County with a trauma-informed approach to care.

I'm requesting a special session because the kids in our juvenile corrections system need help now, not later. While the DOC claims to use a trauma-informed approach to healing our young people, we need to confirm that they're following through on that promise. Transferring the Division of Juvenile Corrections to the Department of Children and Families and eliminating the use of punitive solitary confinement will also ensure that we're healing, not harming. The First Lady advocated last month for training county and state workers to provide trauma-informed care, so I hope you'll embrace these changes as well.

A crisis like this merits a special session. I know the issue of juvenile corrections hasn't impacted you personally, but it's a crisis that my constituents in Milwaukee have been dealing with for years. We're both parents, Governor, and I know you would feel differently if it were your son facing these problems.



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HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lena C. Taylor".

Senator Lena C. Taylor

4th Senate District