



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

December 15, 2015

Rob Hutton  
Wisconsin State Representative, 13th Assembly District  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Corrections  
220 North

HAND – DELIVERED

Dear Representative Hutton,

Today, we write with great urgency in requesting that you hold a formal hearing on the investigations of alleged abuses and potentially criminal behavior at the state-operated Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls correctional facility (Lincoln Hills).

As you have been aware for quite some time, there are serious allegations of cruel, unjust, and potentially criminal behavior at Lincoln Hills. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has been investigating these allegations since January and has resulted in many staff being put on paid leave and the recent departures of the school's superintendent and the state's juvenile corrections head.

In response to the DOJ investigation, a sweeping criminal John Doe probe was opened this past October to investigate potential crimes of child abuse, second-degree sexual assault, misconduct in public office, child neglect, abuse of inmates, strangulation and suffocation, intimidation of victims, use of pepper spray to cause bodily harm, intimidation of witnesses, tampering with public records, and violating state or county laws governing institutions at the facility.

This follows a pattern of behavior we have witnessed at other correctional institutions across our state, including instances of overcrowding, lack of accountability, and failing to afford basic safety standards for both staff and inmates. We must address these issues in a broken system that desperately needs immediate attention from Wisconsin's elected leaders.

As legislators who represent the communities of the youth and staff at Lincoln Hills and have legislative oversight of our state's corrections system, it is time for us to stand up and demand answers to the decisions and actions that have jeopardized the safety and security of those at the facility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mandela Barnes  
Wisconsin State Representative  
11th Assembly District

Sondy Pope  
Wisconsin State Representative  
80th Assembly District

David Bowen  
Wisconsin State Representative  
10th Assembly District