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First Lincoln Hills Monitoring Report Highlights Continued Over-Reliance on Pepper Spray, Solitary Confinement

Youth advocates say this underscores need to close Lincoln Hills, Copper Lake and invest in small, community-based alternatives

Milwaukee, WI (January 14, 2019): Today, the first report from the monitor appointed to oversee the settlement agreement at the troubled Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake youth prisons was filed in federal court.

Unfortunately, the report confirms that these youth prisons are still relying on pepper spray for nonviolent incidents. Additionally, despite a reduced reliance on solitary confinement, some youth still end up in isolation for weeks at a time. Youth in solitary confinement still spend more than twenty hours per day in their cells and are not provided adequate access to meaningful education or other programs.

“While the report shows some improvements, many alarming and harmful conditions remain,” said Karen Lindell, Senior Attorney at Juvenile Law Center. “As Governor Evers put it after his visit last week to the troubled facilities, the work needed to ensure safety and fair treatment for Wisconsin’s young people is ‘far from over.’”

The [report](#) is the first officially filed since the settlement reached last year between the ACLU of Wisconsin and Juvenile Law Center and the state of Wisconsin.

“The report makes clear that the state of Wisconsin needs to proceed, quickly, with its plans to remove all youth from Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake,” added Karyn Rotker, Senior Staff Attorney at ACLU of Wisconsin. “Further, the state’s focus should be on providing services to youth in their homes and families and ensuring that all facilities are small and therapeutic. Now is not the time to create smaller versions of this failed prison model. We urge the new administration to include resources to do so in the upcoming budget request.”

Staff from Juvenile Law Center and ACLU of Wisconsin are available for comment.

Juvenile Law Center advocates for rights, dignity, equity and opportunity for youth in the foster care and justice systems.

Founded in 1975, Juvenile Law Center is the first non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the country. We fight for youth through litigation, appellate advocacy and submission of amicus (friend-of-the-court) briefs, policy reform, public education, training, consulting, and strategic communications. Widely published and internationally recognized as leaders in the field, Juvenile Law Center has substantially shaped the development of law and policy on behalf of youth. We strive to ensure that laws, policies, and practices affecting youth advance racial and economic equity and are rooted in research, consistent with children's unique developmental characteristics, and reflective of international human rights values. For more information about Juvenile Law Center's work, visit www.JLC.org.

[The ACLU of Wisconsin](http://www.aclu-wi.org) is a non-profit, non-partisan, private organization whose 13,000 members support its efforts to defend the civil rights and liberties of all Wisconsin residents. For more on the ACLU of Wisconsin, visit our website at www.aclu-wi.org, like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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