

Sen. Johnson: Juvenile justice reform moves forward

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 7, 2017

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MADISON – Wisconsin State Senator LaTonya Johnson (D – Milwaukee) released the following statement regarding State Senate passage of 2017 Senate Bill 35 – legislation she authored which requires juvenile correctional officers to report suspected child abuse and neglect:

“I am proud to be a part of what is being described as the ‘first concrete step’ to address the serious allegations of abuse and neglect at Lincoln Hills. Requiring juvenile correctional officers to be mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect will create much-needed accountability and help aid in the safety of both juvenile offenders and staff at the facility.

“While I believe this legislation is a small but important tool that will help break the culture of silence and subject those who fail to report suspected child abuse and neglect to criminal penalties, much work remains to be done.

“Our kids are attempting suicide and correctional workers are experiencing vicious assaults. The crisis at Lincoln Hills affecting children, families, and workers has gone on for far too long, and it’s far past time that we get serious about reforming our juvenile correctional system.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues on additional measures to improve the safety and security of youth and staff in our juvenile facilities and ultimately improve outcomes for our children who encounter the justice system in Wisconsin.”

2017 Senate Bill 35 was overwhelmingly approved by the full Wisconsin State

Senate and now awaits consideration in the Wisconsin State Assembly.