

WisDems: Walker agrees to do his job after years of willful neglect and political cover up at Lincoln Hills — now when it threatens his own re-election

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Contact: [Melanie Conklin](#), [608-260-2409](#)

Walker agrees to do his job after years of willful neglect and political cover up at Lincoln Hills — now when it threatens his own re-election

Six years of dangerous inaction by Republicans caused a crisis at the juvenile facility to mount and still no immediate action is planned

MADISON — “Almost 50 years in the legal system, I’ve seen and heard a lot [but] the indifference in this sordid tale is absolutely inexcusable.”

Gov. Scott Walker’s history of indifference toward outrageous violence, out-of-control abuse and horrifying neglect of Wisconsin residents working and living at Lincoln Hills School for Boys juvenile corrections facility is inexcusable.

However, the sentence quoted above is from an alarming letter Walker received from a Racine circuit judge back in 2012, shortly after Walker shipped juveniles from other corrections facilities to Lincoln Hills in his first budget. An attached memo sent by the judge details a juvenile being sexually assaulted and knocked

unconscious and left for hours without medical attention.

Walker's latest proposal to close Lincoln Hills comes **six years** after he was first warned about the ongoing abuse, mismanagement and neglect at the facility. While any reprieve from the nightmarish conditions at Lincoln Hills is welcome, Walker's future solutions with no immediate action come at the expense of the guards and residents who suffer while Walker ignores their plight. The majority of Walker's proposals will not take effect until 2019, leaving guards and residents at risk of further violence and abuse.

"Nowhere has the inattention and neglect to Wisconsin by Gov. Scott Walker taken a more serious toll than in his refusal to address the violence, incompetence and abuse at Lincoln Hills," said Martha Laning, chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. "Walker hid from his responsibilities until the governor's own cabinet member decided to blow the lid on his dangerous neglect and political cover-up. Now, suddenly, he hopes to weasel his way into re-election by again punting on actions needed to protect citizens' lives and well-being."

The sexual assault the judge initially contacted Walker about in 2012 is simply one among many shocking problems that have plagued the juvenile corrections facility during both off Walker's terms. Since then, we have learned horror stories of a resident whose toes have been amputated after being shut in a door, we've learned of sexual assault and harassment towards residents and we've learned of unsafe working conditions for guards.

Just two months ago, with employees' and residents' families begging for action and attention, Walker callously stated he had no intention of visiting the troubled facility. Also guilty of inaction and inattention, Attorney General Brad Schimel punted his duties as well, botching the investigation. This resulted in the FBI coming in and taking over the investigation because Walker and Schimel were not adequately addressing the problems at Lincoln Hills, leaving residents and employees unsafe.

"The fact is Walker didn't care enough then, and he doesn't care enough now to offer a timely solution to this urgent crisis," said Laning. "It appears Walker will only pay attention when he's worried about his campaign and reelection."