

# WisDems: When will Lincoln Hills close?

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MADISON — Gov. Scott Walker continues his political cover-up of the mounting crisis at the Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls — but this time he is misleading those most impacted: workers and youth at the facility and their families. Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Martha Laning stressed that it is time to call Walker's bluff: Give the public a closing date for Lincoln Hills. Walker must also make public whatever timeline he developed during his alleged year of planning.

"Gov. Walker needs to be honest with the people of Wisconsin about this urgent crisis he's ignored," said Laning. "If he truly has been developing plans for more than year, it should be easy to give the public a date Lincoln Hills will close down.

"However his own statements reveal he plans to dump these problems on the next governor in 2019 and is just trying to bury further mounting evidence he's been an absentee governor."

Up until last week, Walker dodged the thorny issue, repeatedly refusing to act and ignoring numerous Democratic plans (such as the one he is belatedly embracing) proposals and legislation to improve the situation. Two months ago, he stated plainly that things were safe and he flatly refused to visit or meet with an injured teacher or alarmed family members.

It has been 5 years, 10 months and 25 days between when Walker was first warned about the serious cases of abuse and neglect going on at Lincoln Hills and when his administration announced the school's closure.

During those 2,155 days, there have been numerous incidents of horrifying abuse at Lincoln Hills, including but not limited to sexual assault, dismemberment and physical abuse of both youth and employees. In 2015, a criminal investigation into Lincoln Hills was launched by Attorney General Brad Schimel, an investigation he botched so severely that the FBI had to step in and take over. Unfortunately, Walker and his administration largely stayed silent during this period.

Because of his inaction, it will likely be two or more years until Lincoln Hills is fully closed, and those personally impacted by this crisis have a right to know when that will be.

Concluded Laning: "If Walker is unable to provide a date, it will answer the question of whether this plan has actually been in the works for a year. Six years of crisis on his watch is plenty of time to come up with a detailed plan to close Lincoln Hills given the urgency of the problem and the real harm being done to Wisconsinites that Walker is supposed to represent and protect."