

Assembly signs off on tweaks to youth justice law

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The Assembly signed off on a bill modifying a law passed last session that restructured the state's juvenile justice program.

The bill, which received a joint public hearing last week, would push back the closure of the state's troubled youth prisons and give counties more time to apply for grants to build regional facilities.

Under state law, the recently formed Juvenile Corrections Grant Committee was intended to have received finalized applications from counties by March 31. But the committee only approved a final version of an application two weeks ago and accepted letters of interest at that deadline instead.

The bill would provide a six-month extension to July 1, 2021, to close the youth lockups at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. It would also provide three-month extensions to June 30, 2019, to the timeline for submitting grant applications to the grant committee; and to October 1, 2019, for the grant committee to submit the plan for funding grant applications to the Joint Finance Committee.

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The bill passed by voice vote. It now heads to the Senate, where it would need to be passed by the end of the month to avoid a rapidly approaching deadline for counties to apply for grants.