

Sen. Darling: Bipartisan bill to ensure closure of Lincoln Hills approved

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Madison - The troubled youth detention center, Lincoln Hills, will close next year thanks to a bipartisan bill on its way to Governor Evers' desk for approval. The measure closes the facility by the end of June 2021. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle applauded the bill.

State Senator Alberta Darling

"Closing Lincoln Hills is important, but so is working with our local communities on

the best locations for holding youth offenders in the future. I look forward to those discussions and to make sure communities are included.”

State Senator Van Wanggaard

“The Legislature is committed to closing Lincoln Hills as quickly as possible. The new, hard deadline for closing Lincoln Hills by June 30, 2021 is realistic and achievable. All we need to do is maintain our focus on the task at hand – reforming juvenile corrections in Wisconsin. With the bipartisan momentum coming from passing this bill, we can’t let up now.”

State Senator Lena Taylor

“Justice delayed, but not denied. That is what I have shared with concerned residents about the extended deadline to close our troubled juvenile correctional facilities. While we are willing to provide our partners adequate time for the completion of new locations, we are also committed to work diligently to ensure the continued safety of both youth and staff at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake during the transition.”

State Representative Mark Born

“I applaud the Legislature’s passage of the Lincoln Hills trailer bill that is a product of listening to all stakeholders involved. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues and the counties to ensure the closure of this facility is done right, and the startup of new state and county facilities is done so in a manner that provides the necessary reforms to our juvenile justice system.”

State Representative Michael Schraa

“We’ve listened, we’ve refined, and we’ve stood firm. We listened to county partners who need enough time to plan and build after delays from the new administration. We’ve refined the bill with technical changes to make the bureaucracy less complicated. We’ve stood firm that Lincoln Hills will have a definite close date. I hope the governor will do what’s best for troubled youth and sign the bill.”

State Representative Evan Goyke

“This legislation is vital to ensuring that ‘The Wisconsin Model’ becomes a reality. I was proud to collaborate in a bi-partisan manner with Rep. Schraa and colleagues over the last two sessions on the drafting and introduction of the bill. The work continues.”

State Representative David Bowen

“I am encouraged to finally see bipartisan momentum in the Legislature to continue working on behalf of our incarcerated youth towards the closure of Lincoln Hills & Copper Lake and towards new closer-to-home centers equipped for trauma-informed rehabilitation. I look forward to continuing to work with Republican and Democratic colleagues to further reform our youth & adult justice systems and especially ensure that all of Wisconsin’s youth get supported to get on the right track to become productive members of society and the economy.”

State Representative David Crowley

“The bipartisan passage of Act 185 was monumental for the state of Wisconsin: Lincoln Hills was a crisis that needed to be addressed. Act 188 brings necessary technical fixes to the current legislation and ultimately allows our children to be brought home in a safe and responsible manner.”

Assembly Bill 188 unanimously passed both houses of the Legislature and now heads to Governor Evers for final approval.