

Senate approves delaying closure of youth prisons

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The state's troubled youth prisons would close six months later than originally planned, while counties would get additional time to apply for grants to fund the regional facilities slated to help reshape the juvenile justice system in Wisconsin, under legislation the Senate approved today.

The bill, which next goes to the gov after clearing the Assembly last week, was approved unanimously. Sen. Tim Carpenter, D-Milwaukee, originally voted no, but then switched his vote.

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 earlier this month 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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