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ACLU of Wisconsin: Applauds Gov. Evers' decision to save Chaney Center and build new youth facility to allow path to close problematic Lincoln Hills

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MILWAUKEE — The ACLU of Wisconsin today applauded Gov. Tony Evers for his decision to keep the Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center open and choose a different Milwaukee location to build a new proposed Type 1 juvenile facility, creating a path to finally close Lincoln Hills.

Earlier this year, the ACLU of Wisconsin and several other local advocacy groups spoke out against the Department of Corrections proposed plan to demolish the Chaney Center for the new facility. The coalition sent a letter to Gov. Evers, urging him to consider alternative sites for the new youth prison.

The selected location at 7930 West Clinton Avenue would allow incarcerated youth to move closer to their communities without depriving Milwaukee of the essential services of the Chaney Center.

The Chaney Center currently operates as a minimum-security adult facility that provides work release programs and other vital transitional services to incarcerated individuals nearing the end of their prison sentences and preparing to reenter the community.

"We are so glad that Governor Evers' actions today proved what several other organizations and we have known all along: that we did not have to choose between

bringing our incarcerated youth closer to home and helping Milwaukee men reintegrate into their communities," said Abby Kanyer, deputy director of community engagement at the ACLU of Wisconsin. "This is a major step forward and provides a path to finally close Lincoln Hills, a facility that has long been unable to provide a healthy and safe environment for the youth housed there."

"Members of the Milwaukee community have been working tirelessly to convince our leaders to adopt a plan that gets incarcerated youth out of Lincoln Hills and closer to their families without sacrificing the needs of returning citizens, who rely on the Chaney Center to help get them back on their feet. We are grateful that the governor has listened to what the people of Milwaukee, and Wisconsin, have been asking for, and we celebrate being one step closer to closing Lincoln Hills."

The Milwaukee Common Council has a special meeting set for 10: 30 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 12, to vote on the site. The ACLU of Wisconsin urges Milwaukee residents to contact their alderperson before Friday's meeting to urge the Common Council to approve the site. Your alderperson's contact information is available here. More information about the special meeting is available here.