

WisDems: Kleefisch tries to take credit for Lincoln Hills after ignoring abuse as Lieutenant Governor

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MADISON, Wis. – Governor Evers signed a bill today to close the Lincoln Hills School for Boys, after Republicans previously rejected plans in both of Evers' budgets to close the school, which has been fraught with claims of abuse. Gov. Evers has been pushing to shut down Lincoln Hills for years, and today, he fulfilled that promise.

While Robin Vos tried to give Rebecca Kleefisch all the credit for this bipartisan accomplishment, Kleefisch's record speaks for itself. As lieutenant governor, Kleefisch largely ignored the issue, once stating via a spokesperson after a 2015 visit, "She has no recollection that any parent, student or staff person mentioned abuse issues." Since leaving office, Kleefisch has also offered no proposal of her own to improve conditions or shut down and replace Lincoln Hills.

Problems at Lincoln Hills [intensified](#) as a result of the Walker-Kleefisch administration's decision to close the [Ethan Allen School for Boys in 2011](#), and relocate its residents to a single facility. The abuses and troubling conditions that followed should have been apparent as early as 2012 – three years before Kleefisch's spokesperson claimed she "has no recollection" of issues – when [a judge wrote to the administration](#) about the sexual assault of an inmate. As [other incidents](#) of physical violence followed, an internal investigation began in [October 2014](#) and the facility has been left without a solution from Republicans since.

Kleefisch continues to prove that she has no serious strategy to address public safety in Wisconsin. In fact, she has a disastrous record of slashing shared revenue funds by \$76 million in 2011, which is a crucial funding stream for various

programs, including police departments. This isn't a surprise for the Walker-Kleefisch administration, [who also proposed abolishing the Parole Commission in 2017](#) and carelessly lost track of [nearly 3,000 convicted sex offenders](#).

Gov. Evers has prioritized funding for public safety and violence prevention in our communities. Recently, Gov. Evers announced more than \$50 million to help make our communities safer, which will go to every tribal and local law enforcement agency in the state, as well as integrate licensed mental health professionals into Milwaukee's 911 dispatch center, prevent reckless driving with road repairs, and expand pre-trial supervision staffing. More than \$16 million will go toward reducing the pandemic-related backlog of criminal cases statewide, to include the backlog of cases in Milwaukee's criminal division.

"Rebecca Kleefisch's primary campaign is treading water, but she can't rewrite history," said **Democratic Party of Wisconsin Rapid Response Director Hannah Menchhoff**. "Republicans did not prioritize closing down the Lincoln Hills facility under the Walker-Kleefisch administration. Kleefisch didn't have a serious plan for public safety then, and she still doesn't have a serious plan for public safety now. With lackluster poll numbers Republicans are half heartedly trying to give her a win that she had nothing to do with."