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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2024

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EVERS ADMINISTRATION GAVE OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO ENTITY PRAISING LINCOLN HILLS

MADISON – The Evers Administration has paid over one million dollars to the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) and its Executive Director, Michael Dempsey over the last six years. Evers and his Administration frequently touts CJJA as holding up Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake as models for the future of juvenile corrections.

“No wonder CJJA thinks Lincoln Hills is so great, they’re getting paid to say that,” said Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee. “It doesn’t matter if Lincoln Hills is more dangerous and juveniles are committing more crimes while at Lincoln Hills. Can you imagine getting a million dollars, and saying ‘You’re doing everything wrong?’ Of course not.”

The CJJA “work[s] to improve youth correctional services and practices by uniting the nation’s youth correctional chief executives and providing a source of positive support for these leaders.” Collectively, the CJJA and its Executive Director, Michael Dempsey have received \$1,028,324 over the last six years from the Evers Administration according to the state’s financial transparency website, openbook.wi.gov. It is unclear what value, if any, Wisconsin gets for this million dollars.

In addition, The Mandt System, one of the CJJA’s “Circle of Friends” sponsors, has received contracts from the Department of Corrections worth \$191,000 over the last three years. The Mandt System is self-described as “holistic evidence based training to reduce workplace violence”, and is now the sole model for the prevention and de-escalation of negative behavior at Lincoln Hills. It was also singled out by staff at the committee hearing in Merrill earlier this month as part of the problem at Lincoln Hills.

“The Evers Administration seems to be wasting money on think tanks wanting to reduce the behavior of correctional officers, rather than actually correcting the behavior of young criminals,” said Wanggaard. “Lincoln Hills is less safe for juveniles and staff than it was 4-5 years ago. Staff Assaults are up, and kids are coming out with longer criminal records than they went in with. If the Evers Administration doesn’t change paths, it doesn’t matter where the next juvenile prison or “school” is. The result will be the same, and we’ll keep turning out more dangerous criminals from our juvenile justice system, just closer to home.”

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