

WisDems: Another Walker non-answer on Lincoln Hills raises a significant question

Posted on Friday, Jan 12, 2018

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Contact: [Melanie Conklin](#), [608-260-2409](tel:608-260-2409)

What changed to make your office finally address this crisis?

MADISON — On Tuesday, Gov. Scott Walker's clumsy cover-up of his neglect of the crisis at Lincoln Hills grew even more flimsy as he struggled to answer a basic question about its closure. [The following is an exchange between Walker and WSAW:](#)

WSAW Reporter: "Why did it take so long to have your office do anything with regards to Lincoln Hills and the overcrowding. I was told by your office that you've been working on it for a little over a year, but you also found out about this six years ago."

Walker: "Well, the changes have been made by the Department of Corrections consistently over the last several years. We take safety and security — so what was announced this past week wasn't the first step; it's one of many steps." (sic)

Walker's evasive non-answer leaves the public wondering about the "many steps" Walker suddenly claims to have taken to address this crisis because he has done nothing to substantiate his claim that the plan to close Lincoln Hills has been in the works for over a year. This leads to a natural question: If there were many steps being taken before, why Walker's sudden interest in finally addressing this situation?

Just two months ago, [Walker told the AP](#) that he was leaving it up to the Department of Corrections make whatever changes it felt were needed for security at Lincoln Hills. He made no mention of any ongoing planning, continuing to show a complete lack of personal concern over the crisis. That would be an unusual response from someone who at that point had been actively working on a plan to close Lincoln Hills for more than a year.

Walker's timeline is suspect — horrifying stories of abuse and mismanagement at Lincoln Hills have regularly emerged for years through aggressive reporting on the crisis. The only things that have changed recently are the threat of a tell-all book from Walker's former Department of Corrections secretary Ed Wall and the fact that Walker is facing a tough re-election.

"All signs point to Walker moving on Lincoln Hills in order to cover up his years-long neglect of this crisis and his utter lack of leadership," said Martha Laning, chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. "The people of Wisconsin expect more than a governor who only does his job in campaign years."