



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 9, 2018

CONTACT: Ken Taylor, Executive Director
ktaylor@kidsforward.net, 608-284-0580 x 302

Closing Lincoln Hills Is the Right Thing To Do

MADISON, WI – Kids Forward supports Governor Scott Walker’s plan to close the Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake detention center. We applaud the individuals and organizations who have been tirelessly advocating for this change. Moving incarcerated youth to smaller facilities closer to where they reside will provide better opportunities to work collaboratively with local resources and families while they are confined. In addition, by focusing on mental health and trauma informed care, the likelihood of youth successfully returning to their communities significantly increases.

“This is an important and much needed step forward for our juvenile justice system,” said Ken Taylor, Executive Director of Kids Forward. “As we do this, we must use the best research about what works for youthful offenders. We must engage families, local resources, youth, counties, and advocates in carefully developing these new programs to ensure that only youth that really need secure confinement are placed in them.”

It is essential that Wisconsin reform secure detention centers for its youthful offenders. The decision to close the Lincoln Hills detention center is just the first step toward broader, much-needed criminal justice and juvenile justice system reforms.

“Elected officials must work to lessen the state’s reliance on secure facilities by supporting youth and families in ways that increase their ability to thrive and decrease the likelihood of their involvement with the justice system in the first place,” added Taylor.

Wisconsin must also look to reform its criminal justice system for adults. Rather than expanding the adult prison system, there should be increased investments in treatment and diversion programs that provide better outcomes, save money, and reduce the need for prisons. Wisconsin already spends more on corrections than neighboring states, and locks up more people than Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Michigan. It is also essential that we address the significant racial and ethnic disparities that plague Wisconsin’s justice systems.

###

Kids Forward advocates for effective, long-lasting solutions that break down barriers to success for children and families in Wisconsin. Using research and a community-informed approach, Kids Forward works to help every kid, every family, and every community thrive.