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## Youth Justice Milwaukee Statement on Federal Judge's Ruling On Solitary Confinement Against Lincoln Hills Youth Prison

MILWAUKEE -- [Youth Justice Milwaukee](#) (YJM) released the following statement in response to [U.S. District Judge James Peterson's injunction](#) requiring Wisconsin to reduce the use of solitary confinement and pepper spray at Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls:

"Today's order is another acknowledgement of the abuse we are putting our kids through when we lock them up and take them out of their homes," said **Jeffery Roman, a founding member of Youth Justice Milwaukee**. "We are hopeful this order will help stop the abuse in Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, but the only way to truly help the youth is to permanently close their doors. Until these horrific practices are put to an end, youth will continue to be at risk.

"Studies have shown that youth prisons do not lead to safer communities. Instead they traumatize already vulnerable kids by taking them away from their families and homes. It's time to stop trying to reform youth prisons and start investing in the resources kids need to succeed."

[Overwhelming evidence](#) confirms that youth prisons are harmful, ineffective, and excessively expensive. Youth in these facilities are routinely subjected to maltreatment which can exacerbate trauma, limit learning and lead to future recidivism. A majority of Wisconsinites support focusing on prevention and rehabilitation programs rather than incarceration. [Recent YJM polling](#) found that 75 percent favor keeping young people out of youth prisons and, instead, investing in community-based alternatives which give youth the opportunity to repair harm to victims and communities. The rampant abuses at Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Cooper Lake School for Girls have been [widely documented](#), as they remain under investigation by the FBI.

Youth Justice Milwaukee (YJM), a coalition of community organizations, youth advocates and family members of youth involved in the juvenile justice system continues to call on state officials to stop sending Wisconsin's youth to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake. To sustain long term behavior change and create a safer community with less victims, fewer youth must be funneled into the prison system and the state must support a range of effective community programs, that offer targeted supervision and services including restorative justice, intensive mentoring, mental health treatment, family therapy, and other interventions.

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*Youth Justice Milwaukee is a broad-based campaign advocating for community-based, family-centered, restorative programs as an alternative to locking up children in Wisconsin's youth prisons. Youth Justice Milwaukee represents a coalition of persons who were incarcerated as youth, families of youth who are or were incarcerated, service providers, and local and national youth justice advocates.*