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Youth Justice Milwaukee Statement on Latest Copper Lake Solitary Confinement Abuse Lawsuit

MILWAUKEE -- [Youth Justice Milwaukee](#) (YJM) released the following statement in response to the federal lawsuit against state prison officials with the Department of Corrections filed by two former inmates at [Copper Lake School for Girls, including one who says a guard helped her harm herself](#):

“These allegations, if true, are absolutely appalling. The staff in these youth prisons, who have been entrusted with helping our most vulnerable young people, are in fact, a threat to their very lives. We absolutely cannot stand for the existence of a facility where this abuse is possible, and it’s clearer than ever that real reform in these facilities is impossible,” said **Jeffery Roman, a founding member of Youth Justice Milwaukee.**

“Stories like these are disturbing to their core and show the incredible dangers that youth face in Copper Lake and Lincoln Hills; yet, the state continues to keep their doors open and is still sending young people to these traumatizing facilities. The young women who filed suit were sent across state lines, far away from their families and homes. Although Milwaukee County has reduced the number of youth sent to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, the population has remained the same, possibly in part because, like in this case, youth are facing interstate transfers. Wisconsin is failing our youth and so is the national system.

“As a community, we cannot sit idly while our children are being taken away and locked up in facilities unfit for anyone, let alone young people. Right now, YJM is working with local officials and community leaders to advocate for closer to home treatment, alternatives that are proven to reduce the chance of recidivism, and ultimately, the closure of youth prisons. [Join our efforts](#) and help us shutter youth prisons and provide young people with the opportunities they need to be successful.”

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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.