

Jim Doyle
Governor



Rick Raemisch
Secretary

State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections

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For Immediate Release

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GOVERNOR NAMES TASK FORCE TO BETTER SERVE WISCONSIN YOUTHS AS JUVENILE CRIME IN WISCONSIN PLUMMETS

Governor Jim Doyle today appointed a statewide committee to determine how Wisconsin's Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) should respond to a nearly decade-long drop in juvenile crime.

With the male youth arrest rate down 22 percent since 2001, court-ordered commitments to state juvenile correctional facilities have plummeted over the last 10 years. The average daily population has decreased by more than 35 percent between 2001 and 2008 alone. The falling rates are clear indications that early intervention and programming at the county level and efforts by the Department to focus on successful reentry are reducing crime.

However, the population drop at Wisconsin's juvenile correctional institutions has raised per capita costs and contributed to a projected DJC budget deficit of \$25 million over the next two years. To explore ways to cut the deficit, Governor Doyle is appointing a special committee to closely examine the state's two male juvenile institutions, Ethan Allen School in Wales and Lincoln Hills School in Irma.

The Juvenile Corrections Review Committee will comprehensively look at the operations of both facilities and explore how best to serve juvenile offenders in the future while reducing costs, including possible consolidation of the institutions and/or programming. Under any option to reduce juvenile institutional space, the committee also will examine options for converting it, including possible creation of a new juvenile community-based program or an adult alcohol and other drug (AODA) treatment facility to address higher demand expected under Wisconsin's new, tough drunk driving legislation.

The committee is comprised of 11 juvenile justice experts from around the state representing the faith-based community, the judiciary and other vital stakeholders. The committee's charge is to explore the overall environment at each institution and provide a final recommendation to the Governor's Office by the end of May. Committee members are:

- Greg Lewis, St. Gabriel's Church, Milwaukee
- Charles McClelland, Word of Hope Ministries, Milwaukee
- Laurie Vance, Therapist-Express Yourself, Milwaukee
- John Burmaster, Gleason
- Jim Moeser, WI Council on Children and Families
- Judge Glenn Yamahiro, Wauwatosa
- Judge Mary Triggiano, Milwaukee
- Asst. Supreme Court Justice Robert Kittecon, Keshena
- Judge Wendell Askenette, Keshena
- Jon Solberg, Executive Director Rawhide
- Judge Neal Nielsen, Vilas County

"Through thoughtful and realistic discussion about the needs of the state's juvenile corrections system, we will be able to increase the success we're seeing with falling juvenile incarceration rates and save tax dollars at the same time. It's the best way to meet the needs of tomorrow," Department of Corrections Secretary Rick Raemisch said.