

Youth Mistreatment in Gov. Walker's Dept. of Corrections

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MADISON - A top Department of Corrections official and a facility administrator were removed from their positions last week amid a state investigation into allegations of mistreatment of youth at a state prison for juvenile offenders.

A Department of Justice investigation of potential abuse at the Copper Lake and Lincoln Hills schools in Irma has revealed a “culture” among some staff “that may leave youth at risk for harm,” according to a Dec. 3 memo written by Corrections Secretary Edward Wall. The review began in January.

The allegations first surfaced at DOC in late 2014, according to the memo. And two weekends ago, Wall wrote in the memo, a youth was “assaulted by a staff member and sustained serious physical injury due to the actions of a youth counselor.”

Years of Republican budget cuts, forced overtime policies and limits on workplace safety have created major problems at Wisconsin’s correctional institutions. Severe understaffing and increased safety risks have become all too common as a result of Gov. Walker’s anti-worker policies and mismanagement of taxpayer resources.

Democrats have put forward numerous proposals to improve worker safety and save taxpayer dollars in our Corrections Department, but the majority party continues to ignore these serious issues. It's time for Gov. Walker and legislative Republicans to acknowledge the problems they've created and work to improve community safety across our state."

Legislative staffer Tony Palese contributed to this report.