

Records reveal Northwoods legislator failed to act on child safety concerns.

MADISON, WI - Newly obtained documents show that **Senator Tom Tiffany** (R-Hazelhurst) was contacted directly by multiple whistleblowers about problems at the Lincoln Hills juvenile facility. An open records request to his office revealed more than 550 pages of documents including detailed warnings about understaffing, inmate overcrowding, assaults and other safety issues.



Months before a high-profile FBI raid on the facility, one email warned Sen. Tiffany bluntly that riots, fights and assaults had “skyrocketed.”

“As shocking as these 550 pages of documents are, what's even more disturbing is Sen. Tiffany's inaction,” said SSDC Executive Director Matt Ullsvik. “Despite being confronted with horrific claims of child abuse at a facility in his district, the record shows that Tom Tiffany dropped the ball. Even after being warned about safety concerns and understaffing at Lincoln Hills, Tom Tiffany voted to cut over 100 staff positions and $140 million in funding from the Department of Corrections budget last year. Had Sen. Tiffany acted on these warning and addressed the serious safety concerns at Lincoln Hills, it’s possible that additional cases of child abuse, neglect and assault could have been prevented.”

Records show that Sen. Tiffany was warned at least as early as April 2015 about dangerous conditions at the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake juvenile facilities. Aside from one email to the Dept. of Workforce Development, none of the 550+ documents released by his office show any effort by Sen. Tiffany to intervene on behalf of at-risk employees and children at Lincoln Hills.

“When children and workers needed his help the most, Sen. Tiffany let them down and chose to

ignore multiple warnings," added Ullsvik. "We may never know whether Sen. Tiffany was trying to protect Gov. Walker's image during the lead up to his presidential campaign, or whether he didn't think the red flags were worth investigating. However, given the ongoing safety concerns and staff shortages, it's time for Sen. Tiffany to step up to the plate and stop defending Gov. Walker's failures. Children, parents and workers deserve better than Tom Tiffany's indifference and inaction."