



March 14, 2023

TO: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer
Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist, II
Elizabeth Hertel, MIDHHS
Sen. Sylvia Sanata, MI Senate Health Policy & Human Services Committee
Sen. Kristen McDonald Rivet, Appropriations Subcommittee, DHHS
Rep. Jason Martus, MI House Health & Human Services Committee
Rep. Christine Morse, MI House Health & Human Services Committee

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports the creation of a facility within Grand Traverse County to house and treat youth who are acting in an unsafe manner to themselves or to their community. It is imperative that there be a facility in northern Michigan so juveniles can be close to their homes and families.

While the 13th Circuit Court, Family Division Courts in Leelanau and Grand Traverse operate a juvenile justice court that addresses youth and family issues, they do not have timely access to detention and residential treatment services outside of a child's home. The nearest facilities are miles away and are typically operating at capacity. If children are placed in one of these facilities, the distance often prevents families from participating in treatment services with their child. Children with significant behavioral needs are too often "placed" in emergency rooms or released back to their homes as they wait for these residential placements. This temporary and inadequate arrangement places stress on hospitals, families and most of all, children.

A nearby juvenile residential treatment and short term detention would alleviate the long wait times for placement, provide therapeutic services close to a child's home and allow families to remain involved with their children. Such a facility would benefit the children in need, their families, and our community. Northern Michigan Needs a Facility to House Youth in Our Area. We are requesting funding for the construction of a 32-bed Court operated facility located in Grand Traverse County to serve Northern Michigan. Based on a comparable project in Genesee County and the cost of land, we estimate a need of 50 million dollars for a facility. Once built, counties participating from the 13th Circuit would pay the operational costs.

We urge you to appropriate \$50 million to build the juvenile detention and treatment facility in Northern Michigan.

Sincerely

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