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03-11-16

A juvenile justice reform group wants 80 of the country's oldest and largest youth prisons closed down, including one in North Dakota. The North Dakota Youth Correctional Center in Mandan is home to more than 100 young offenders. But the Youth First Initiative says such facilities are relics of the past, because they're expensive and often times don't have good outcomes for young offenders. Liz Ryan, president of Youth First, says most juvenile prisons are indistinguishable from adult facilities...

... "that young person." : 14

The group also released a new poll showing about 77 percent of Americans favor changing the focus of the juvenile justice system from incarceration to rehabilitation. Youth First says the U-S has about 54-thousand juveniles locked up. In North Dakota, the most expensive confinement option for a single youth offender costs more than 125-thousand dollars a year, compared to about 12-thousand to put that young person through public school. Ryan says despite how much money the state spends on incarceration, it still increases the likelihood that some youths will end up back behind bars as an adult...

... "back on track." : 10

Additionally, Youth First notes that North Dakota locks up black and Native American youth at much higher rates than their white peers. Ryan says redirecting money from the prisons to community programs could help end those disparities.

## Young Caucus Go-ers

03-02-16

Many of the attendees, possibly half the people at last night's record Republican Precinct Caucuses in Fergus Falls, were new faces. And among those first-timers were people in their late teens and old enough to cast ballots in the presidential straw poll. We talked with a few of them.

Hannah Demmer just turned 18. She says she voted for Dr. Ben Carson...

... "right direction." :10 (Demmer-Carson)

Abbey Newkirk is a senior at Kennedy Secondary School, who also voted for Carson. She says her social studies teacher, Elizabeth Abrahams, got her interested in grassroots politics...

... "get involved." :07 (Newkirk-class)

Another senior in Mrs. Abrahams class is Lilly Nelson...

... "to come here." :08 (Nelson Abrahams)

The turnout at this year's Fergus Falls Republican caucus was 432 more than in 2014, 345 more than in 2012, 437 more than in 2010 and 384 more than in 2008.

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NewsC  
7:30

## More Female Juvenile Offenders Than Previous Years

02-22-16

Otter Tail County is experiencing a multi-year rise in juvenile crimes. In a newly released report for 2015 County Probation Director, Chuck Kitzman, says a lot of those cases involve either a drug or alcohol charge...

Kitzman 32 SEC

OUTCUE: "...this year we had more female offenders than male offenders" Director Kitzman also says "out of home placement costs for juveniles is quite significant, reaching one million and 25 thousand. Kitz says the department continues to work to find ways that number could be reduced.

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## Franson - Child Care Obstacles

02-15-16

State Representative Mary Franson of Alexandria says state regulations seem to have a lot to do with the current shortage in Minnesota child care providers.

Franson is the chair of the Select Committee on Affordable Child Care. At a recent committee hearing in Brainerd, lawmakers were told that state regulations to protect infants have become burdensome, to the point it's hard to find people to provide that service...

... "a major issue." : 16 (Franson-Liability)

And what happens when there is no available infant care? It forces a parent to stay home with their child but still have to deal with the loss of income. Franson says in the past 10 years, Minnesota has lost 3,000 in-home, licensed child care providers. She says the impact is greatest in rural Minnesota.

Franson says listening sessions the committee is holding around the state may lead to ideas that can gain bipartisan support to help the situation.

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## Disc Golf Course

02-03-16

An effort is underway to design and construct a 27-hole disc golf course at Delagoon Park south of Fergus Falls.

The project is being spearheaded by Daily Journal Publisher Tim Engstrom. He says early projections on cost indicate about \$30,000 would have to be raised for baskets and landscaping. But Engstrom says he'll search for ways to bring that cost down, while still providing a first-class course....

... "local economy." : 16

Engstrom says he'll be in search of grants and hole sponsorships but will also do other fundraising in 2016. It's hoped construction of the course can happen in 2017, after the city signs off on the project.

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## Franson on Childcare

02-01-16

State Representative Mary Franson of Alexandria says she's concerned for the childcare industry after news that the Bureau of Mediation Services has ordered a union election for Minnesota child care providers. The election will include 2,384 providers who receive Childcare Assistance Program funding.

Ballots will be mailed February 8<sup>th</sup> and must have arrived to the BMS office by February 29<sup>th</sup>.

Franson, a former childcare provider, was recently named chair of the newly-created Select Committee on Affordable Child Care.

Franson says she's concerned about the impact unionization would have on childcare costs and access. She says childcare providers need to make an educated decision about whether private businesses should be subject to paying union dues. Franson says just a fraction of the state's providers will have the opportunity to vote on a union that could ultimately be negotiating on issues that impact providers across the state.

Childcare providers who do not currently accept Childcare Assistance Program funding are not eligible to vote in the childcare union.

Franson  
Franson

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## Child Care Wages

01-19-16

Child care workers are some of the lowest-paid professionals in the nation, including in Minnesota. A children's nonprofit group is encouraging the state to consider raising providers' wages, and balancing that priority with the rising costs of care. Val Peterson with Childcare Aware Minnesota says despite the state having some of the most expensive child care in the country, many highly educated providers earn little more than minimum wage...

... "similar backgrounds." : 11

Peterson cautions that while raising the minimum wage would be a step in the right direction, that alone would not solve the state's affordability problem. Childcare Aware is instead backing a joint approach of raising wages and increasing the public investment in child care programs. According to the U-S Bureau of Labor Statistics, most full-time child-care workers in cities like Minneapolis and St. Paul earn about 23-thousand dollars a year – while their elementary school counterparts make almost three times as much. Peterson says low child-care wages are essentially subsidizing the cost of care for parents...

... "break-even point." : 14

As state lawmakers prepare to head back to session in March, early-childhood education groups are asking them to increase public funding to reimburse some licensed child-care programs. Ann McCully, who heads Childcare Aware Minnesota, says that could help increase wages without burdening parents or businesses.

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## Child Care Costs

01-04-16

For married couples with children, Minnesota was recently ranked the least-affordable state in America when it comes to paying for child care centers. For many Minnesota parents the average cost for that care comes in at about 14-thousand dollars, which can be more expensive than state college tuition. That's according to a recent report from ChildCare Aware, a national children's advocacy group. Ann McCully, executive director of ChildCare Aware Minnesota, says the report's numbers are correct, but they could use some context. She says the high cost ranking looks only at the cost of child care centers, rather than family child care homes...

... "to think about." : 12

According to the report, those family care home costs average about 8 thousand dollars, close to half of what the centers charge. Still, McCully says, there's no denying that regardless of which services parents choose, child care can be very expensive, even for middle-class families. But she says the problem is that some child care providers are already charging less than what it's costing them to keep their doors open...

... "to pay more." : 08

With Minnesota sitting on more than a billion-dollar budget surplus, Governor Dayton has been talking about expanding a child care tax credit once state lawmakers head back to session in March. McCully says funding for the state's Child Care Assistance Program has remained stagnant over the past several years.

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