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Review Finds 'Benign Neglect' Leaves Youth Inmates In Squalor

Thursday, February 02, 2006 - 09:35 AM

Sacramento, CA -- A special security team that toured four of the state's eight youth prisons last summer says "Benign neglect appears to permeate" the Division of Juvenile Justice.

Reports obtained by The Associated Press find California's youngest inmates are living in squalid conditions that endanger guards and youths, while managers operate in daily crisis because of a lack of funding.

Shower doors at some youth prisons are so rusty that wards can break off pieces of metal to use as weapons. Two-way radios and personal alarms worn by employees only work intermittently.

And there are holes in dorm walls and perimeter fences. Critics have urged the closing of youth prisons, saying the young wards could be better served in community programs.

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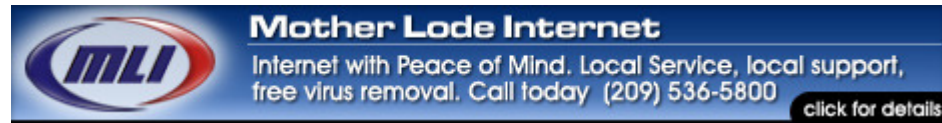
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