

THE GREEN WIRE

SENATOR TIMOTHY P. GREEN - DISTRICT 13

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Sen. Timothy Green, D-Spanish Lake, will introduce comprehensive legislation to protect the elderly and mentally disabled in private group home facilities.

Families of those served by the state's habilitation centers for the developmentally disabled called for legislation earlier this year that will maintain state-operated centers while instituting standards, oversight and accountability for Missouri's private group home industry.

"The Legislature failed to act during this year's legislative session and should immediately enact the recommendations of the recent Mental Health Task Force," Sen. Green said.

"The ten horrific and tragic deaths at the private group home in Anderson, MO is a compelling call for critical reforms."

The legislation would:

- Ban further employment anywhere of staff found to be abusive;
- Open private facilities to the scrutiny of the state's Sunshine laws;
- Mandate reporting of abuse and neglect, including medication errors, in private facilities;
- Require staff turnover reporting to the General Assembly;
- Require dismissal of private contractor employees who violate state laws and rules;
- Require private facility staff to have training comparable to state center employees, to be paid for by the private provider; and
- Place a moratorium on any Hab center transfers to private facilities until the legislation is fully implemented.

"The state must have more stringent investigations," Sen. Green said. "Facilities that house our elderly and mentally ill, even the single floor buildings, should have sprinkler systems and a higher staff-to-resident ratio than found at the Anderson Guest House."

The senator added that "the shenanigans of founder Robert J. Dupont Jr., the man convicted of defrauding Medicare, are shameful to the point of negligence. He violated the spirit, if not the letter, of state law that forbids the Department of Health and Senior Services to license a nursing home that has an 'operator' or 'any principles on the operation' convicted of a felony involving a health care facility.' He did this by placing his wife on all the legal documents while he was still involved in the daily operation of the Anderson Guest House. That is dishonest and the entire situation turned deadly.