



**Letter to the Editor – *Southeast Missourian***

*250 words*

In reply to ““Groups home are better solution” dated Sunday, June 24; the quintessence of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Olmstead* is ‘choice’. Parents and guardians should have a choice where their loved ones will be cared for and Bellefontaine Habilitation Center in my district should remain a viable option.

I introduced comprehensive legislation that would require the private, loosely regulated facilities to be held to the same standards of care as state-run habilitation centers. Families of those served by the state’s habilitation centers for the developmentally disabled called for legislation that will maintain state-operated centers while instituting standards, oversight and accountability for Missouri’s private group home industry.

Many of the adult residents at the habilitation center have lived at the facility for over 20 years, and some for even 50 years. The habilitation center is their home. The center has a gym, swimming pool, doctor, and dentist office, as well as an occupational center similar to a sheltered workshop. When the residents need care, exercise, medical treatment, or work, they travel a short distance (sometimes walking distance) to the doctor, dentist, physical therapist or other services because these services are available on the property.

The ten horrific and tragic deaths at the private group home in Anderson, MO is a compelling call for critical reforms. The state must have more stringent investigations into private group homes and facilities that house our elderly and mentally ill. Bellefontaine, a community within a community, is a viable option for parents and guardians.

***Senator Timothy P. Green, represents the 13<sup>th</sup> District in St. Louis County and resides in Spanish Lake.***