Places for Struggling Teens™

"It is more important to get it right, than to get it first."

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WHO SHOULD CHOOSE?

By: Lon Woodbury



Congressman Miller's hearing on October 10, 2007, was among other things the start of a national government push to impose itself into the decision of where a struggling teen should be placed when residential placement is needed.

Traditionally, the decision of where to place a struggling teen needing residential treatment has primarily been the parents' prerogative. Court decisions have consistently upheld this right and responsibility of parents. The network of private residential parent-choice schools and programs we work in is based on this right and responsibility. The parents hire us, either as consultants or as programs, and we are pledged to do what is right for the children and their families. If the right and responsibility are ever taken away from parents, then our network would either disappear or be radically changed so as to look more like the current publicly funded and regulated schools and programs. Parents would no longer have a say in their children's placement and must accept what public officials decide regarding any residential placement. This radical change is unlikely in the foreseeable future, but once legislation is passed into law, it tends to expand its scope and authority over time.

Unfortunately, some parents either refuse to take on this responsibility when their child is having problems, or are unable to due to death, limited finances, crisis in the family, lack of sense of responsibility, etc. As a consequence over the years, all of the states have established several institutions to provide residential care for children with problems through several different agencies when the parents are unable or unwilling to place their children. For these good reasons, the right and responsibility of parents to choose residential programs are no longer absolute. This is now shared between States and the parents with some national government involvement through public institutions in a complicated mixture. At this point direct federal involvement in the private parent-choice network is virtually non-

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Spring Lake Ranch Celebrates 75
Yoga At Independence Center
20 Peaks Runners Win State
Ashby Academy Campus For Sale
FFS Debate Team Honored
Pathways Enrolls Year-Round
Gatehouse Parent Publishes Story

Full **SEEN N' HEARD/** ***Pg 28***

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