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Colorado lawmaker wants more accountability, transparency in state's guardianship system

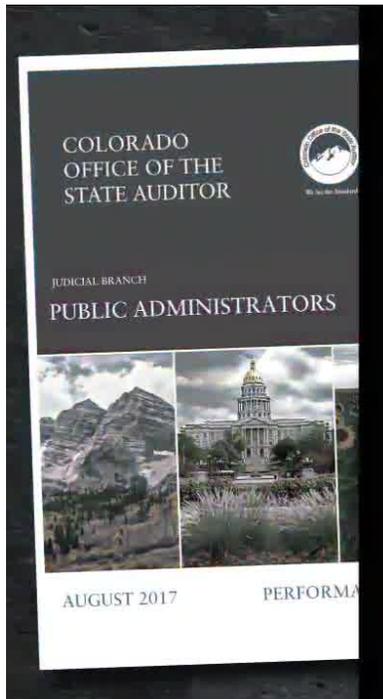
Denver7 Investigates exposed how guardians can bleed estates

By: [Jennifer Kovaleski](#)

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A Colorado lawmaker wants more accountability and transparency in the state's guardianship system after Denver7 Investigates exposed how guardians can bleed estates of the most vulnerable with little oversight.



Fees - Accountant/CPA - [REDACTED]	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Fees - Conservator - Non-Prof	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fees - Conservator - Prof - [REDACTED] (Fees: \$110,743.00; Costs/Advances: \$38,938.94)	\$67,663.96	\$149,681.94
Fees - Court Visitor - [REDACTED]	\$278.04	\$278.00
Fees - Guardian - Non-Prof	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fees - Guardian - Prof - Human Network Systems	\$16,344.96	\$26,661.83
Fees - Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) - [REDACTED] Esq	\$18,013.32	\$19,918.62
Fees - Investment Acct Management	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fees - Legal for Conservator - [REDACTED]	\$7,672.20	\$8,668.67
Fees - Legal for Guardian	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fees - Legal for GAL	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fees - Legal for Protected Person - [REDACTED] Esq	\$3,000.00	\$5,576.79
Funeral	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gifts	\$0.00	\$0.00
Groceries/Hygiene/Household Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00
HOA Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hobbies	\$0.00	\$0.00
Home Furnishings - furniture for room at Balfour	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Insurance - Home/Renter		

DENVER -- A Colorado lawmaker wants more accountability and transparency in the state's guardianship system after [Denver7 Investigates exposed how guardians can bleed estates](#) of the most vulnerable with little oversight.

“There has to be a better way,” said State Rep. Kim Ransom, R-Douglas County. “They need to have some type of oversight and there really needs to be some accountability for these guardians.”

Denver7 Investigates [first told the story](#) of twin brothers Greg and David Wells.

The probate court placed their mother, Sharon Wells, 80, under guardianship, and court records show how quickly the money started disappearing.

“Her golden years have been turned into a nightmare,” Greg Wells said.

During an 18-month period, records show the conservator charged nearly \$150,000 to Sharon Wells, making up to \$325 an hour for taking care of her estate. Items included tasks like answering emails, phone calls and managing her properties.

“The fees absolutely need to be transparent,” Ransom said.

When a probate court finds an adult mentally unfit, a judge can place them under guardianship. The guardian is then responsible for making all their medical, financial and legal decisions. It also often means isolating the elderly from their family.

Lawmakers previously tried to act

Former Colorado State Sen. Laura Woods tried to help [fix the guardianship system five years ago](#).

“If the state legislature can’t shut them down. I don’t know who can, and that’s what we were trying to do,” Woods previously told Denver7.

Ransom was also co-sponsor on the 2016 bill. It would have given basic rights to those under guardianships, access to a phone, mail, and visits from family. However, the bill died in the State House of Representatives.

“I was very grateful when I saw your report because it actually pointed out that there really was a problem that existed at the time and continues to exist now,” Ransom said.

The Wells brothers estimate the conservators and guardians who were responsible for their mother have drained more than a million dollars from her estate.