

## Houston & Texas News

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### TYC conservator resigns from business

By LISA SANDBERG

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AUSTIN — The Texas Youth Commission's newly appointed conservator announced Thursday that he would immediately resign his position with a private juvenile justice contractor one day after he publicly declared that his private business posed no conflict of interest with his public office.

In a statement, conservator Richard Nedelkoff said he was resigning his position as chief operating officer with the Florida-based Eckerd Youth Alternatives Inc. "to avoid any appearance of impropriety."

A panel of lawmakers grilled Nedelkoff on Wednesday about his business relationships with at least one national expert, Rex Uberman, who is associated with the private Florida firm and who Nedelkoff invited to Texas as a consultant.

"I have no hidden motives, no agenda and like a lot of people who entered the fray, everything to lose," Nedelkoff told a House subcommittee on criminal justice.

TYC spokesman Jim Hurley said the agency was paying living and travel expenses, but no salary, to Uberman to assess conditions here. It was not immediately clear how much he was being reimbursed. Hurley said two other consultants who offered guidance to Nedelkoff received no compensation.

Rep. Jim McReynolds, D-Lufkin, a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, said he was relieved to learn of Nedelkoff's resignation. "If he's going to be the conservator of Texas, by God, let's be sure everything is clear and the Texas taxpayers knows exactly who our conservator is."

Nedelkoff was said to be in meetings Thursday and unavailable for comment.

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