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Former rep plans to euthanize dog that bit neighborhood student

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Former state representative Mark Wright said he is heartsick to learn that one of his dogs bit a Reed Middle School student Friday and he plans to have the dog euthanized.

"We feel like it is the right thing to do; we don't want to take any chances in the future," said Wright.

Wright said his three children were leaving home to go to school when one of his black Labradors, Charlie, got out of the house. His eldest child went after Charlie, but it was too late. The dog had jumped on and bitten an eighth-grader who was walking to school.

The incident occurred in the 2000 block of North Robberson, Springfield Police Lt. Kirk Manlove said. The bites were not life-threatening, and the student was taken to a hospital for treatment, he said.

Wright, who was in Texas at the time of the incident, said his wife and oldest daughter went to see the victim last night. Wright said they told him the student needed five stitches.

Manlove said the student did not provoke the dog before the attack, and Wright said he believed that to be true. However, Wright said a neighbor told him that a group that did not include the victim had been taunting the Wright's two black Labradors before and after school in recent days. Wright speculated that was the reason for Charlie's behavior.

Wright said he had been cited before because his dogs got out of the house, but they did not bite anyone. Charlie's behavior Thursday morning was very uncharacteristic, he said.

"Our dog was loving and kind, a great family dog. Our dog never bit anyone inside the family or outside the family."

Wright was cited for allowing a vicious dog to be at large and was cited by animal control for not having the dog tagged and for not having current vaccinations, Manlove said.

Wright said when he spoke to officials in Animal Control they said the dog would remain in isolation for 10 days.

"After that time we'll determine (whether) to euthanize the dog," said Wright.
