

Legislator to seek funds for retarded

State Assemblyman Anthony J. Mercorella, Bronx Democrat-Liberal, said yesterday he will introduce legislation in Albany that will earmark funds to aid the profoundly retarded who, he maintained, have been "criminally" neglected.

During an interview on WCBS-FM's "Changes" program, Mercorella said that "there are at least 10,000 profoundly retarded children in New York City alone who are not being served by any institutions whatsoever." He further contended that "those who are institutionalized, both in the Willowbrooks and the private agencies that exist, languish away because there are no programs for them."

The funds he will ask for, Mercorella said, "will be clearly earmarked for the profoundly and severely retarded so that there will be no discre-

tion or of a director or a superintendent of a state institution will use the money. I don't subscribe to the feeling that these retarded cannot be educated. I believe that with proper motivation they can — if the professionals take an interest."

A profoundly retarded child, according to Mercorella, is one whose "intellectual capacity is so low, so involved with neurological impediment and with emotional disturbances that ing, perception and other normal processes are severely impaired."

"Every five years or so," Mercorella continued, "we have an expose. People go into the Willowbrooks and come out with disclosures of what is going on — showing the horrendous conditions and disregard for human life. The clamor comes. Money is found and sent out to the state institutions, but unfortunately very little of it finds its way toward helping the profoundly retarded, the ones whose condition caused the clamor. That's because, in the judgment of the therapists and the administrators, these kids are beyond help. They feel, erroneously, that these kids are so far gone that they cannot make any dramatic recovery."