

# Willowbrook suit demands action

Rep. Mario Biaggi filed suit in the Bronx yesterday demanding court action to correct "mid-19th Century" conditions at Willowbrook State School.

A hearing is scheduled at 9:30 a.m. Monday before Supreme Court Justice Andrew R. Tyler. State Mental Hygiene Commissioner Allen Miller and Willowbrook director Dr. Jack Hammond are named as defendants.

Biaggi is acting on behalf of Amelia and John Renelli, residents of his district, who complain that authorities at Willowbrook do not provide adequate protection for their 21-year-old daughter, Adrienne, who has been a patient at the institution since she was 10.

The Bronx Democrat-Conservative is asking the court to direct Miller and Hammond to properly perform their

mandated duties to protect the people placed in their care and custody and to guarantee their health, safety and welfare."

The papers in the case include an affidavit submitted by the Renellis saying their daughter was beaten so severely in January and February, apparently by other inmates, that she had to be hospitalized twice.

Biaggi visited the young woman in the hospital and urged doctors to put her in "an area of proper supervision so that she would not be the subject of further physical abuse."

The congressman's plea and similar appeals from the parents went unheeded, Biaggi said.

"The supervisory staff and director of the institution have turned a deaf ear to our pleas for safe surroundings, and

conditions for our daughter," the Renellis said. "They have refused to protect her from physical abuse which leads to the injuries that have placed her in the hospital."

Biaggi said treatment at Willowbrook does not conform to the standards set down for public mental institutions in a recent ruling by a federal court in Alabama.

The court held that such institutions must provide a humane psychological and physical environment, a qualified staff large enough to administer adequate treatment and individualized treatment plans.

"Overcrowding is a serious condition that exists at Willowbrook," Biaggi said in an affidavit. "To this add the problem of understaffing and undertraining of personnel."