

Poem on retarded's plight put in Record by Kennedy

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OF OUR WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Some people write letters to their congressmen. Constance Bedson writes poetry.

The young Bayside, Queens, woman, appalled by the plight of mentally retarded children at the world's largest school for the retarded, Willowbrook State School, composed a poem entitled, "Willowbrook."

She sent it to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., who has a mentally retarded sister.

Kennedy was touched by the poem and the anguish it expressed about national priorities, an aide said. He placed it before Congress by publishing it this past week in the Congressional Record. This is the poem:

"I saw him there. The Child

Retarded. Huddled he was.
And naked. On the bare floor
he was.
Hiding his face. From the
World did he hide it.
O we must reach the Moon.
And the Stars.
I saw him there. The Child
Retarded.
O where were the Arms to
embrace him?
And kind words in his ear?
Does he ever hear Laughter?
Or Music?
It takes Money.
It takes Money.
And we must journey to the
Stars.
I see him there on the bare
floor.
Huddled. Neglected. Alone.
I hear him wailing.

The Moaning.
They say the smell is terrible.
Is terrible.
And we must journey to the
Moon.
The cold barren land.
At Willowbrook, New York.
There is a child. Huddled.
Hiding his face from the
World.
O, where are the Arms to
Embrace him?
I hear the Wailing.
"Willowbrook" is the second
poem by Miss Bedson to be
published in the Congressional
Record.
The first, about strip mining,
was sent to Rep. Seymour
Halpern, D-N.Y., who also
placed it in the Record last
January.