

Feldt: Russo was 'inefficient, indifferent' to Willowbrook

Perhaps no single incident demonstrates the inefficiency and callous indifference of our local elected officials to the needs of people than the scandal of Willowbrook State School, Robert Feldt, Liberal assembly candidate, said today. "While Assemblyman Lucio Russo was decrying the limitations of his powers and making pathetic excuses for his failure to have visited the institution in seven years," he continued, "I was actively engaged in assuring that the lives of 5,000 patients would improve. "In Albany, Russo demanded that the fat be cut from the Department of Mental Hygiene's budget. On Staten Island he chose to be appalled at conditions in Willowbrook. More than this hypocrisy, one must be awed by Russo's failure to recognize his direct role in condemning the lives of the children of Willowbrook.

"In his too many years as a representative of Staten Islanders, Russo has managed to teach his constituents one lesson — to expect nothing from a legislator. To boast of his 20 years experience would be appropriate had it been a career of achievement and not, as is the case, one of apathy."

"In the 11 months since Willowbrook came to the public's attention, I have been instrumental in preparing lawsuits which brought city, state and federal officials to the courtroom. With initiative, with enthusiasm and with hard work we have managed to shake the foundations of the Willowbrooks of this country.

"Assemblyman Russo will try once again to ride into office on the basis of his tenure. He offers the past, I offer the future."