

Our opinion

Verdict should be accepted

A report that Willowbrook Developmental Center can be expected to go to the Appellate Division of Supreme Court to battle against two orders to reinstate five safety officers seems unbelievable.

A black officer was dismissed nine months ago. He charges he was harassed and falsely accused of committing infractions against regulations on the job. Four white officers say they were forced to resign because they were opposed to discriminatory acts against the black officer.

The state Division of Human Rights decreed that the men had to be returned to their jobs. Willowbrook took the case to the division's Appeals Board, and that board concurred in the original decision.

That should be the end of the case. Willowbrook has lost the decision twice. Taking the matter further is a questionable use of the taxpayers' money. And the longer it takes for the Developmental Center (or the bigwigs in control of the state Department of Mental Hygiene) to realize the case is lost, the more it's going to cost in back pay and other damages — again at the expense of the taxpayers.

In addition to approximately \$10,000 each in back pay, the five men may also be collecting damages for mental anguish suffered as a result of loss of their jobs.

Mentally, and philosophically, as well as economically, the decision should be accepted.