

Our Opinion

A short step forward for the retarded

The state has finally ended months of uncertainty by agreeing to let United Cerebral Palsy, a non-profit group, take control of several buildings at the Willowbrook Developmental Center and care for more than 600 of the institution's residents.

But in arranging for the takeover, which promises to bring better living conditions to some of the residents, state officials skirted the issue of job security for state employees who now work at Willow-

brook.

The Civil Service Employees Association, which represents the state workers, is now suing the state over the issue of the contracting of patient care services to private groups. Because that lawsuit is still pending, United Cerebral Palsy has been given nothing more than a "revocable permit" to care for some Willowbrook residents.

Instead of merely skirting the thorny issue, the state should have

addressed the question of job security for Willowbrook workers head-on before finalizing even a temporary arrangement with UCP.

The agreement, as it is now, provides little security for UCP as it embarks on its new venture. It also provides little comfort for state workers and — worst of all — no guarantee for Willowbrook residents that their living conditions will be appreciably improved in the immediate future.