

the neighborhood. Confusion remains, however, in that the criteria for both are undefined. If agreement between the local board and the state cannot be reached, the case goes to a hearing. If the board is still unsatisfied, the law allows for a suit which essentially charges that the state acted improperly in the site-selection procedure.

While the law helps by providing a structure and time limitations, it often gives the boards the sense that they can and should be in complete control of the operation. In the words of one state worker, "The community boards are milking it for all it's worth."

Murray Schneps questions the constitutionality of the law and asserts that "the rights of the mentally retarded are non-negotiable" and must be enforced regardless of local opposition. "The state," he claims, "is trying



to appease everybody, and the politicians . . . well, that's obvious."

"Sue their asses off," shouted City Councilman Leon Katz over the roar of a recent public meeting concerning a site on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn. "If this one gets through . . . Ocean Parkway isn't going to be the kind of place you wanted it to be." Local politicians have seized the opportunity to muster support by playing to the angry opposition to the hostels. "At a recent meeting in Brooklyn," notes one watchdog, "there wasn't a politician in the borough who didn't show up."

State Senator John Calandra and Assemblyman Guy Velella—the Bronx's two biggest powers in the anti-residence movement—have stated that their policy is simply "to be guided by the desires" of the neighborhoods. Calandra has gone so far as to promise that if a controversial site went through, he and Velella would "fight any appropriations of State funds" for it. Schneps took the opportunity to point out that he sees this as being in contempt of court. But Calandra's opposition is not surprising. While the consent decree was being drawn up, his firm was busy pro-