

viding legal defense for what an official in Albany once called "the worst facility for the mentally retarded in the state"--the Pine Grove School. The school was finally shut down.

Assemblyman Vellella's position has been: "A group home does not fit on a purely residential block." He suggests that the "least restrictive environment" be erected on the grounds of the Bronx State Hospital.

Even though the politicians are doing an excellent job of stoking the fire of discontent, they could take a lesson in inflammatory rhetoric from a man not in their field per se.

"Get Mr. King up there," shrieks a frantic voice out of a crowd of 600 protesters packed into a small Staten Island auditorium. "Let Mr. King speak!" And as the dapperly dressed middle-aged black man approaches the mike, the crowd begins to roar. King is preceded by his reputation.

"My name is Felton King," he begins in a slow, powerful voice. "I'm the president of Local 429 at the Staten Island Developmental Center [Willowbrook]. I'd like to give you some facts. . . . Approximately 88 percent of the clients being placed out in the community . . . have a severely bad behavior problem. . . . It is a fact that these kids have communicable diseases." The audience reacts with ahs and scattered whispers. King pauses after each fact.

"What we call hepatitis carriers . . . tuberculosis. . . ." (General noise and confusion.) "What would happen if they spit in your children's face? They could transmit tuberculosis . . . hepatitis. . . . If these children scratch or break your child's skin, this means your child's then contaminated with hepatitis. . . ." (Mounting chaos.)

"Last month approximately 565 of their employees went out on workmen's compensation because severely, profoundly retarded children broke their skulls, broke their legs, and fractured their ribs. . . ." (Loud applause.)

"They say they're not going to harm your kids. . . . That's a bunch of crap. . . ." King leaves the microphone while the audience extends the enjoyment of its own disorder. It is clear that one of Felton King's primary concerns is the threat of losing union jobs when Willowbrook closes.

Dr. Curt Bakal of the city's Health Department, when informed of King's claims, responded, "The guy would have a point if . . . no, the guy really doesn't have a point. If anything, the chances of a Willowbrook client transmitting tuberculosis in the community would be less than that of the general population because of better medical