

Carey urges GOP to OK review panel

Advance Albany Bureau

ALBANY — Gov. Carey yesterday urged Senate Republicans to reconsider their opposition to funding a court monitor of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

Carey, at an afternoon press conference, warned that if the Legislature fails to allocate money for the monitor, the Willowbrook Review Panel, the courts may appoint a master to supervise care for 5,000 former and current residents at the Willowbrook institution.

"Even those who oppose the panel," Carey said, "would not be satisfied, in my estimate, with the appointment of a special master."

The governor requested \$363,000 for the Review Panel in his executive budget, submitted last January, but the funds were excluded from the final budget adopted this week because of Senate Republican opposition.

The New York Civil Liberties Union, a plaintiff in the original court case brought to improve the plight of the retarded at the Island center, said Monday it might request appointment of a master if the panel is not funded. Masters are individuals appointed by a court to run an institution or program when it believes a governing body, in this case New York state, is not acting responsibly.

The Review Panel was appointed in 1975 to monitor state compliance with a court decree, signed by Carey, guaranteeing improved care for about 5,000 former and current Willowbrook residents.

"I have nothing to fear from the Review Panel. I know what our record is in depopulating Willowbrook," said Carey, noting state efforts to meet the Consent Decree requirement that all but 250 center residents be moved into community residences.

Carey said that it was his understanding that the Review Panel would lose its out-of-state members, whom critics charged billed the state for huge travel expenses and made inappropriate and expensive suggestions regarding care of the retarded residents under its purview.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman John J. Marchi, R-Ward Hill, said he was not necessarily "cemented" on the Review Panel issue and might consider funding the monitor. Funds for the panel were cut off last year, forcing the seven-member body to discontinue audits of programs serving the center's former and current residents.