

Carey signs bills aiding the disabled

By **BRUCE ALPERT**
Advance Albany Bureau

ALBANY—With handicapped children and adults looking on, Gov. Carey yesterday signed into law four bills he says will improve community-based programs for the disabled.

One measure, sponsored by Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, D-West Brighton, would require the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to develop a new funding mechanism for sheltered workshops. The new formula, Carey said, for the first time will provide benefits for retarded people who have lived at home and have not been institutionalized.

Another bill, also sponsored by Mrs. Connelly, would allow people who run family-care programs for former developmental center or psychiatric center residents to take 10 days off a year. Currently, the state provides substitute caretakers for only five days annually.

"These dedicated family caretakers are certainly deserving of this increase," Carey said.

Mrs. Connelly, who chairs the

Assembly Mental Health Committee, also sponsored legislation that allows the commissioner of mental retardation to appoint a receiver to run a private program in which he believes the health, safety and welfare of its residents are in danger.

The legislation was prompted by the discovery that an upstate facility had been spending money earmarked for its retarded residents toward salaries and benefits for top administrators.

Under the legislation, the commissioner could—if he believed alleged abuses by United Cerebral Palsy of New York State reported in a Staten Island Advance series threatened the well-being of its clients—appoint a receiver to run the agency's programs.

It is thought the law could also be used to keep the Mental Retardation Institute in Westchester operating. The program, which serves several former Staten Island Developmental Center residents, is threatened with closing because New York Medical College and Westchester County cannot agree on a plan to

transfer the college-run facility to government control.

A final bill in the package establishes a new developmental disabilities planning council to improve the coordination of services for the disabled.

In other action, Carey signed a bill that requires insurance companies to contact the Department of Motor Vehicles within 30 days after canceling automobile insurance policies. The legislation, which also increases penalties for driving an uninsured vehicle, is designed to reduce the

number of motorists who continue to drive after their insurance lapses.

Another bill approved by Carey would allow courts to issue warrants for eavesdropping devices in investigations of prostitution cases.