

# Connelly invites prospective tenants to Willowbrook

Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly yesterday called on state officials to consider relocating the regional offices of several state agencies to the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

In letters to Gov. Carey and several state commissioners, Mrs. Connelly, a West Brighton Democrat, suggested that the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities would be an "ideal" choice to move to the Island center.

Mrs. Connelly noted that the Office of General Services already has begun seeking alternative office spaces for state agencies now housed at the World Trade Center. Carey has said that trade center should be sold to private developers by the Port Authority, with state agencies gradually moving out of the complex.

"As we are acutely aware," Mrs. Connelly said, "Staten Island Developmental Center is in the process of reducing its population: it is concentrating its remaining clients within several of the center's dozens of buildings," Mrs. Connelly said. "Now is the time, I believe, to make the Office of Mental Retardation's needs known. I think the center would be an ideal location for it."

Cora Hoffman, a spokesman

for the state retardation agency, said the Office of General Services already has expressed an interest in moving the department's regional offices to a Brooklyn office building.

"Obviously, a move to Staten Island Developmental Center would pose some logistical problems because the regional office serves the entire city and it would be difficult for people from the other boroughs to get to Staten Island," Mrs. Hoffman said. "But we certainly would consider Mrs. Connelly's request."

Mrs. Connelly, who chairs the Assembly Mental Health Committee, said a move by the state retardation agency to the Island center would have symbolic value.

"It was not long ago that Willowbrook State School was known as a deplorable institution," Mrs. Connelly wrote. "Since then it has obviously improved, and a move here by the Office of Mental Retardation could serve as a final signal of improvement and change of philosophy."

Mrs. Connelly said her suggestions are the first to be made for use of the surplus buildings at the 382-acre facility.

Mrs. Connelly's office is now located in the center.

— BRUCE ALPERT