

Tragically, the publicity that his decision has brought will set back by years the effort to place those center residents who are appropriate for such living arrangements in community settings, which should be the top priority for all of us. The only way to cure the problems of the institution is to scale down the institution.

By naming a master to oversee the center, the courts in effect appointed someone to do the job that had been done by the Willowbrook Review Panel, which was abolished last year as a result of attempts to reduce its budget. Serving on the seven-member panel were experts in retardation from such places as Georgia and Michigan — experts whose airfare, hotel rooms, meals and per diem salaries were costing the state a scandalous sum.

What I had favored was simply requiring that panel members come from the local area. This area certainly must offer enough experts in the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities to staff the panel and thus contain its extravagant costs — money that would be better spent improving conditions at the developmental center and moving appropriate residents out into the community.

There is no doubt that the state must be monitored and must be



Scenes such as this were commonplace at Willowbrook State School prior to a court-mandated reform of the institution developed in 1975. Now a federal court judge has said care at the facility remains inadequate.

accountable. But I question how much Bartels has accomplished in his latest decision. He has demoralized staff at the institution and once again implanted the image in the public mind of Willowbrook as the "snakepit" — the late Robert F. Kennedy's label, which no longer fits.

How can we expect the community to welcome the retarded to live in its midst when the

state, which will oversee group homes for the retarded, is deemed unfit to oversee the institution from whence they will come?

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