

# Union rep raps state, CSEA on SIDC layoff

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The effect of the closing of the Staten Island Development Center (SIDC) on its employees has not been studied enough, and more needs to be done to help employees find other jobs on Staten Island, a union representative charged last night.

Speaking before 18 members of the Staten Island Advisory Council to the state Division of Human Rights, Cheryl Sellar, an SIDC employee, said that neither the state nor the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), of which she is a representative, is doing enough to prepare workers for the eventual closing of SIDC in favor of smaller group homes.

Mrs. Sellars said that though the state is providing a job fair as well as offering transfers to other state facilities and training sessions in job-search skills, it has an additional moral responsibility to its employees at SIDC.

"I don't know if it's a legal issue, but there is a moral responsibility," she said.

The state should provide on-site training in other job skills to help employees who want to stay on Staten Island, she said, noting that some of them have been at the center for 15 to 20 years.

"I don't think an adequate impact study has been done" on the phaseout of SIDC, said Ruth Chadwick, chairwoman of the

committee, adding that the state "owe(s)" the SIDC employees retraining.

"We don't want a swelling of the welfare rolls," she said. "It's a bad situation."

Under current plans, approximately 1,400 employees will be given the opportunity to transfer to other developmental centers in the city or state, will be employed in a small group home at the facility, or will retire, before the center is dissolved in 1987.

The state says it is phasing out the center and transferring its patients to other facilities as part of an effort to move clients out of institutions and into community residences.

Although Mrs. Sellars could not say how many employees will simply be laid off, she speculated that many who are not hired for group homes will find it economically difficult to transfer.

Mrs. Sellars said that two-thirds of SIDC employees are members of minority groups, and that "the vast majority" of these are single parents, mostly women. These women will have the most difficulties packing up their families to move, she said.

In addition, she said, single women can't attend after-work training — either private or state-provided — because of family burdens. Training programs will therefore have to be provided on the job, she said.

During her speech to the committee, she said that she has

approached the CSEA, but that training programs provided by the union are only given in Manhattan.

When questioned after the meeting, she would not elaborate on what the union is doing to address the situation.

In other meeting business, the committee resolved to draw up a resolution condemning apartheid and asking the United States to cease its policy of "constructive engagement" with the government of South Africa.

Co-chairman Ed Rothberg told the committee that he was handled roughly during an arrest at a protest against former Guatemalan president Efraim Rios Montt at the Gateway Cathedral in Oakwood earlier this month.

The committee decided to send a letter of complaint to Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward regarding Rothberg's allegation that he was arrested without proper cause and that the plainclothes officer who arrested him, a parishioner of the church, refused to give Rothberg his name.

According to Rothberg, the officer made the arrest after Rothberg cautioned him not to handle other protesters roughly.

Also at the meeting, the committee resolved to support the statewide Human Rights Advisory Committee in its efforts to help the state Division of Human Rights obtain \$300,000 in funds to reduce its backlog of cases. The money was vetoed by Governor Mario M. Cuomo.