

# It's your opinion

## Alternatives to group home plan

The following was sent to Gov. Mario Cuomo:

"A letter from Fiorello Cicero concerned state-owned land at Corson's Brook Woods to be used for residences for some 72 retarded persons, who must be removed from their present ones. Under a supposed mandate of a state department responsible for construction of new buildings for these helpless people, part of the woods was destroyed until an injunction stopped the action, but this showed that the state had acted arbitrarily without proper consideration of all the factors involved. However, at a hearing I attended later, many speakers supported that action.

"These people and Mr. Cicero made it look as if the state's plan was an all-or-nothing proposition and that if it were not executed the retarded would be deprived of their right to humane treatment, a gross distortion because there are two alternatives. The one that looks better to me is an open space once used as a private golf course for managers of the former institution. This would be better than the site close to the woods because that would de-

prive patients of the sunshine so good for their health and would isolate them from seeing and being seen because of the woods.

"They would not necessarily be behind gates, as Mr. Cicero declared. Those capable of doing so could have access to the community across the street with or without attendants to help them. If it should, after all, be necessary to have gates, it would be only for protection of those living within them with supervision of those going and coming through them, including outsiders.

"Governor Cuomo, I hope that you will agree that the above alternative to the original plan is the better one."

**DONALD J. GILLAM**

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