

## Mentally retarded

A group called the New York State Committee for Community Living held a demonstration on the Capitol steps to protest state plans for so-called "small residence units," or SRUs, for the mentally retarded.

Funding for the SRUs on the grounds of present state institutions such as the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook would divert resources from the higher goal of residences in the community, the group said.

The committee, with a mailing address in St. George, states: "Many people view the SRU proposal as a policy shift, away from community programs and services, back to isolated and segregated settings . . ."

Such facilities would "waste enormous amounts of public funds and thousands of lives," according to a statement from Kathleen McKaig, downstate coordinator of the committee. State officials deny this.

The rally came one day after the state Office of Mental Retardation released a services plan for Staten Island that erased previous plans to bulldoze a Willowbrook woodland for housing.

The office also announced it will place, on Staten Island, a guarded unit for retarded persons who commit crimes.

## Asbestos

The state Civil Service Employees Association proposed that all buildings owned, leased or occupied by the state, local governments and school districts be inspected for asbestos.

The inspections would be performed by the state Labor Department within 18 months of the proposal's enactment into law and would be followed by action to remove or encapsulate asbestos. Asbestos has been linked to cancer.

Under current law, the inspections do not take place unless a complaint is filed. CSEA President William McGowan said in a news conference here.