



Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens

1500 NORTH SECOND STREET • HARRISBURG, PA. 17102 • TEL: (717) 234-2621

MEMO TO: CHAPTER PRESIDENTS & EXECUTIVES
RIGHT TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: APRIL 17, 1975

FROM: ROGER E. BUCHANAN, CHAIRMAN
RIGHT TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE

RE: DEMOUNTABLE CLASSROOMS PLANNED FOR WHITE HAVEN AND HAMBURG
STATE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

HELP!!! INSTITUTIONALIZATION IS EXPANDING!!! IT IS GOVERNOR'S
HOTLINE TIME AGAIN --- 800-932-0784.

We have lost twice at the State Task Force on Right to Education and with the Secretary of Education, John C. Pittenger.

The Secretary has announced his intention to allow for the building of classrooms on the grounds of Hamburg and White Haven. We ask that you call the Governor and oppose for the following reasons.

1. This action is regarded by the Department of Education as the "least desirable" and contrary to the Department's Plan which calls for the "least restrictive alternative". We believe then that the Secretary's decision is contrary to the Department's own position and to the Consent Agreement, which provides for an "appropriate program of education".
2. It is argued that the classroom buildings are regarded as necessary because no other alternatives are available. Let us argue that if the Department really wanted to educate state school students off grounds, that they have the fiscal and legal capacity to do so. The restraints now imposed on the I.U. are regulations and laws which are reverseable. If we argue strongly enough that institutionalized mentally retarded students deserve the effort required to remove the constraints, they will be removed.
3. The planning process leading to the Secretary's decision started with the I.U. This is contrary to the Department's regulations, Chapter 13, and the State Plan, submitted to the Federal Government, indicating compliance with Part "B" of the Education of the Handicapped Act. These documents state that the local school district has the first line of responsibility for providing a free public education for all students.

Let us argue that the institutionalized child deserves the same system of responsibility and planning that applies to other students and had this happened we don't believe that the students of Hamburg and White Haven would be left with the least desirable, most restrictive alternative. In essence the Department has failed to press its stated procedures on the local school district and has not given the I.U. the capabilities of responding to more favorable options.

Please call the Governor's HotLine between 9:00 and 5:00 and ask that the Department of Education provide the necessary resources and/or mandates to I.U. #18 (White Haven) and I.U. #14 (Hamburg) or to the school districts of Crestwood and Hamburg to provide an appropriate program of education for institutionalized children that is off state school grounds.

Also please telegram the Secretary of Education, John C. Pittenger, voicing your opinion.

The HotLine number again is 800-932-0784.