



June 2019

## Legislative

NASW celebrated Pride Month in June.

**The Equality Act (H.R. 5) Update:** The U.S. House of Representatives passed this bill on May 17 and the Senate companion bill is now pending introduction. Thank you to those who responded to the action alert on this bill to push towards House passage.

Among other things, this bill would ban sexual orientation and gender identity bias on the job and by public accommodation providers such as hotels, restaurants, and health care facilities.



**Improving Access to Mental Health Act (S. 782/H.R. 1533):** This bill is a priority of NASW's legislative agenda during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. The legislation will provide a crucial step forward in access to mental health care for Medicare beneficiaries and in advancing pay equity for social workers. NASW is circulating a sign on letter to encourage lawmakers to cosponsor this bill; national organizations are welcome to sign on to this communication. If you have not already done so, please [email your lawmaker](#) now to urge them to cosponsor.

**The Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act (S. 851/H.R. 1309):** The House Education and Labor Committee approved this much-needed legislation on June 11. It will move to the House floor next. There are currently 191 cosponsors of the House bill. Please [email your lawmaker](#) now to urge them to cosponsor.

**The American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (H.R. 6),** which cancels and prohibits removal proceedings against certain undocumented individuals and provides a path towards resident status, was approved by the full House on June 4. The Act includes three parts: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA); provisions for the estimated 300,000 individuals impacted by the elimination of Temporary Protective Status (TPS), and provisions on special status of individuals impacted by the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

**NASW Hill Day:** As part of its **Association Leadership Meeting**, NASW leaders, including Chapter Executive Directors, Chapter Presidents, Chapter Presidents-Elect and National Board Members met with 230 Congressional offices to urge them to support pro-social work legislation. This included the Improving Access to Mental Health Act (S. 782/H.R. 1533), the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (S. 851/H.R. 1309) and the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1532).



**Fund and Protect the Older Americans Act:** Congress is working on the federal budget for fiscal year 2020, and funding for some Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and other aging services programs is in jeopardy. These programs, many of which employ social workers, are of vital importance to older adults and entire communities. Use NASW's [advocacy alert](#) to urge Congress to pass a budget that enables the OAA and other aging services programs to thrive and to strengthen our communities.

**The Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (H.R. 2480):** The House passed this legislation on May 20 and the companion bill is currently pending introduction in the Senate. The *Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Stronger CAPTA)* is a bold, bipartisan response to combat the rising rates of child maltreatment experienced as the opioid crisis devastates families and communities across the country. The bill was cosponsored by 49 House members on both sides of the aisle.

## Regulatory

**Office of Management and Budget Poverty Measure:** In June, NASW submitted [comments](#) opposing the Trump Administration's proposed changes to the federal poverty calculation. If this change is implemented, vulnerable children and families would no longer be eligible for a variety of federal programs including food assistance, health care and home heating aid. Learn more about the proposed changes and their impact through the NASW blog post: [NASW Urges Members, Organizations to Oppose Trump Administration's Proposed Lowering of Poverty Line](#) and the [Hoosier Times op-ed](#) published by Kathy Byers of NASW Indiana Chapter.

## Collaboration

The **Voting Rights Task Force** is initiating a candidate questionnaire process for presidential and "down-ballot" candidates running for office during the 2020 national elections. The Leadership Conference of Civil and Human Rights convenes the Task Force. The questionnaire will cover a range of issues including, criminal justice reform, economic justice, environmental justice, immigration and women's reproductive health. As a member Task Force, NASW will participate in developing the questionnaire.

NASW and Voting is Social Work are Founding Partners of the **Social Work Votes! coalition**. This coalition will convene a broad range of national social work organizations to drive engagement in the 2020 elections and in voter mobilization.

**Criminal Justice Reform Taskforce:** NASW is working collaboratively with the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association and over 15 behavioral health and related organizations to revise its consensus recommendations on behavioral health in jails and prisons. The effort is in alignment with the objectives of the Criminal Justice Reform Taskforce.

**Gun Violence Prevention:** NASW continues to work collaboratively with Brady on a range of gun violence prevention issues. NASW serves on the Brady working group that was instrumental in getting the **Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (H.R. 8)** approved by the House this spring. The companion bill, the **Background Check Expansion Act (S. 42)**, is pending introduction in the Senate. NASW and Brady will co-host a webinar on July 26 on the impact of gun violence in urban areas. Registration link will be forthcoming.

**World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD):** This year marked the 15th anniversary of WEAAD, observed on June 15. WEAAD raises awareness about elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and reaffirms our society's commitment to the principle of justice for all. Read the latest [NASW Practice Alert](#) to learn about the association's recent elder justice advocacy and how you can get involved in WEAAD and the elder justice movement. Find free resources and tools to enhance your advocacy work like the [Elder Justice Roadmap](#), and WEAAD materials from the [National Center on Elder Abuse](#) (NCEA).

**Older Americans Month:** NASW celebrated Older Americans Month (OAM) in May by participating in a Twitter chat addressing the importance of the Older Americans Act in serving older adults and by publishing an [NASW Practice Alert](#) dedicated to OAM. Download the Practice Alert to read about NASW's recent advocacy in aging, engage with your Members of Congress, and find other aging-focused resources within and beyond NASW.



CONNECT, CREATE, CONTRIBUTE MAY 2019

**Family caregiving and serious illness:** In mid-June, NASW participated in an expert panel convened by the National Quality Forum (NQF) to brainstorm ways of measuring and addressing strain and well-being for family caregivers of people living with serious illness. The strategy session was part of NQF's [Serious Illness Initiative](#), a three-year effort to enhance the quality of care for people living with serious illness. Payers, such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, consider NQF's guidance in developing policy on health care delivery and reimbursement.

**Opportunity Starts at Home:** NASW, in its partnership with the Opportunity Starts at Home initiative for affordable housing and prevention of homelessness, has shared the results of a national survey about American's opinions on the need for affordable housing. The [results of the survey](#) were released by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC).

## NASW Products

[Abolishing Cash Bail to Promote Social Justice](#) is available online.

[Tools for Social Workers to Prevent Gun Violence: Safe Storage of Guns in the Home, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, and Other Methods of Gun Violence Prevention](#) is available online.



**Gerontological Social Work Brochure:** As society's aging population continues to grow, so does the demand for social workers—including macro- and mezzo-level social workers—with specialized knowledge and expertise in aging. A new [NASW Press brochure](#) details the importance of social workers in the field of aging and highlights the training, qualifications, and skills needed to work with or on behalf of older adults and families.

**Get Involved!** We encourage you to join [NASW's Advocacy Listserv](#) to stay up-to-date on legislative, regulatory and other activity at the Federal level. We also have a variety of valuable [resources](#) on our web page to guide members in connecting with their lawmakers.

*For questions about the Washington Update or to suggest content that you would like us to consider for inclusion in a future communication, please contact Dina Kastner, Senior Field Organizer, at [dkastner.nasw@socialworkers.org](mailto:dkastner.nasw@socialworkers.org).*

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, D.C., is the largest membership organization of professional social workers. We promote, develop and protect the practice of social work and social workers and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through advocacy. [Become a member of NASW.](#)



750 First Street, NE, Suite 800 | Washington, DC 20002

Anna Mangum, MSW, MPH, Deputy Director, Programs, [amangum.nasw@socialworkers.org](mailto:amangum.nasw@socialworkers.org)

Sarah Butts, LMSW, Director, Public Policy, [sbutts.nasw@socialworkers.org](mailto:sbutts.nasw@socialworkers.org)