



THE TIME IS RIGHT
FOR SOCIAL WORK
2022 NASW NATIONAL CONFERENCE

#NASW2022

Social Work Advocacy and Public Policy

June 24, 2022

Sarah Christa Butts, MSW
Director of Public Policy, NASW
Pronouns: she/ her/ hers

 **N A S W**
National Association of Social Workers

Agenda

- Welcome
- About the Social Work Profession
- NASW's Policy Portfolio
- State of Play in Washington, D.C.
- Demystify the Policy Process
- Examples of Our Efforts and Progress
- Q and A



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Setting the Stage

*Right is right, even if
everyone is against
it, and wrong is
wrong, even if
everyone is for it.*

--William Penn



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Essential Workers: Front Lines

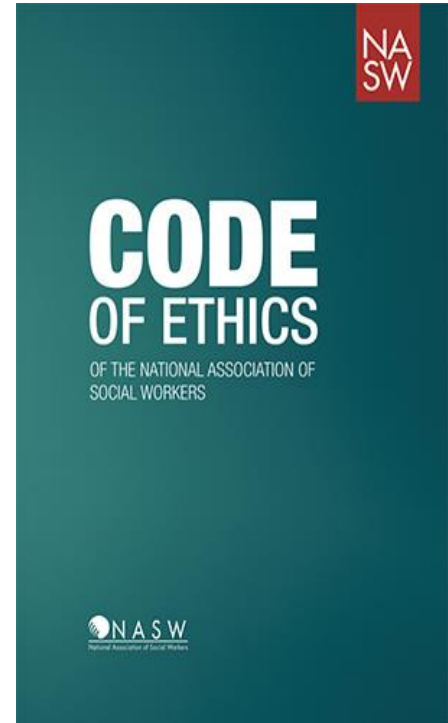
- Social workers considered “essential” workers under Department of Homeland Security during COVID-19 public health emergency
- Providing urgently-needed mental health and social care, including in-person, in numerous settings including:
 - Hospitals and other healthcare settings
 - Schools
 - Child Protective Services
 - Community clinics
 - Independent practice

Essential in Policy and Advocacy

“The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs of people who are vulnerable, oppressed or living in poverty”

“Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions”

“Social workers should engage in social and political action”



Who Are Social Workers?

- The largest provider of mental health and social care services in the nation
- Increasingly a diverse profession both socioeconomic and racially
- The only mental health provider type with an explicit commitment to social justice and an associated policy practice
- Both clinical and policy practice is grounded in social work science

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Who Are Social Workers (cont'd)

- Leaders in *policy making* within all levels of government:
 - 5 social workers in Congress
 - Top appointees in federal and state agencies
 - Hundreds of social workers in state houses
- Leaders in *shaping and influencing policy* outside of government as:
 - CEOs and board members of major associations, other nonprofits, foundations
 - Researchers
 - Voters and advocates!
 - (REMINDER:WE ARE CONSTITUENTS)

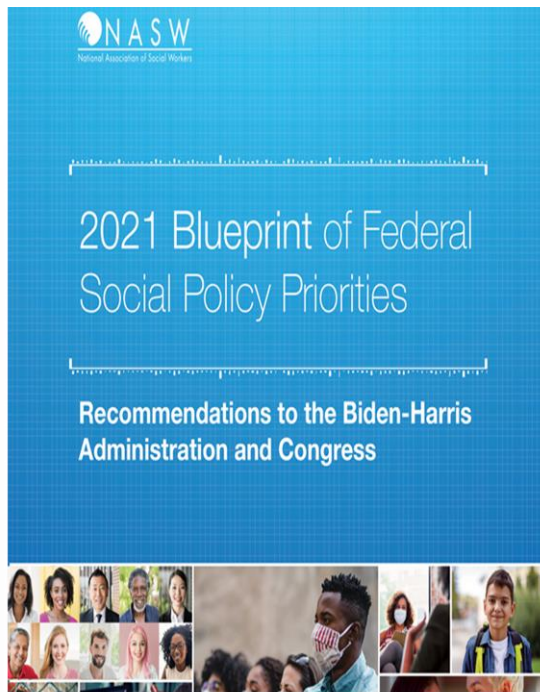
Current Social Workers in Congress



(l to r) Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA), and Rep. Sylvia Garcia (D-TX)

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NASW's Blueprint of Federal Social Policy Priorities



- Actionable recommendations to the Administration and Congress
- 21 issue areas, organized using the Grand Challenges for Social Work
 - Workforce
 - Social Justice
- Endorsed by the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare
- Social policy: many opportunities, under any administration and regardless of which party controls Congress

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The Grand Challenges for Social Work

Eliminate racism	
Ensure healthy development for youth	Create social responses to a changing environment
Close the health gap	Harness technology for social good
Build healthy relationships to end violence	Promote smart decarceration
Advance long and productive lives	Reduce extreme economic inequality
Eradicate social isolation	Build financial capability and assets for all
End homelessness	Achieve equal opportunity and justice



NASW Advocacy

- Regulatory:
 - Federal and state agencies (e.g. US Department of Health and Human Services, including Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Education, etc.)
 - State licensing boards
- Legislative: bills, briefings, and testimony
 - 5 social workers in Congress – few other professions this well-represented – but we need more!
- Executive branch: White House
- Judicial: Courts

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Working in Coalition

- Provide distinctive social work perspective in 60+ national coalitions which include non-profits focused on specific issue areas. These include, among many others:
 - [Mental Health Liaison Group](#)
 - Sarah C. Butts, MHLG board member (2020 - present)
 - AASWSW due to join as affiliate member organization
 - [Coalition on Human Needs](#)
 - [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#)

NASW's Advocacy Portfolio

Workforce Advocacy

- Compensation/reimbursement
- License portability
- Safety on the job
- Student loan debt relief
- Education and training opportunities
- Scope of practice
- Title protection

NASW's Advocacy Portfolio

Social Justice Priorities

- Healthcare Equity
- Economic Justice
- Criminal/Juvenile Justice
- Political Justice
- Immigration Justice
- Climate Justice
- Eliminating Racism

Racial equity is the “through line”

President Biden's Budget: Unprecedented Investments in Mental Health, Behavioral Health and Parity



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Key Developments

- The President released the FY2023 Budget on March 28th, which includes applying the Parity Act to Medicare: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/budget_fy2023.pdf.
- On March 29th, the Senate Finance Committee released its report highlighting the stakeholder comments in response to its Request for Information from last fall: <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/SFC%20Mental%20Health%20Report%20March%202022.pdf>.
- On March 30th, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on parity and behavioral health care integration. Both Senators (including Chair Wyden) and witnesses identified the need for parity in Medicare: <https://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/behavioral-health-care-when-americans-need-it-ensuring-parity-and-care-integration>.
- GAO March 2022 report on access barriers to behavioral health care: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104597.pdf>.

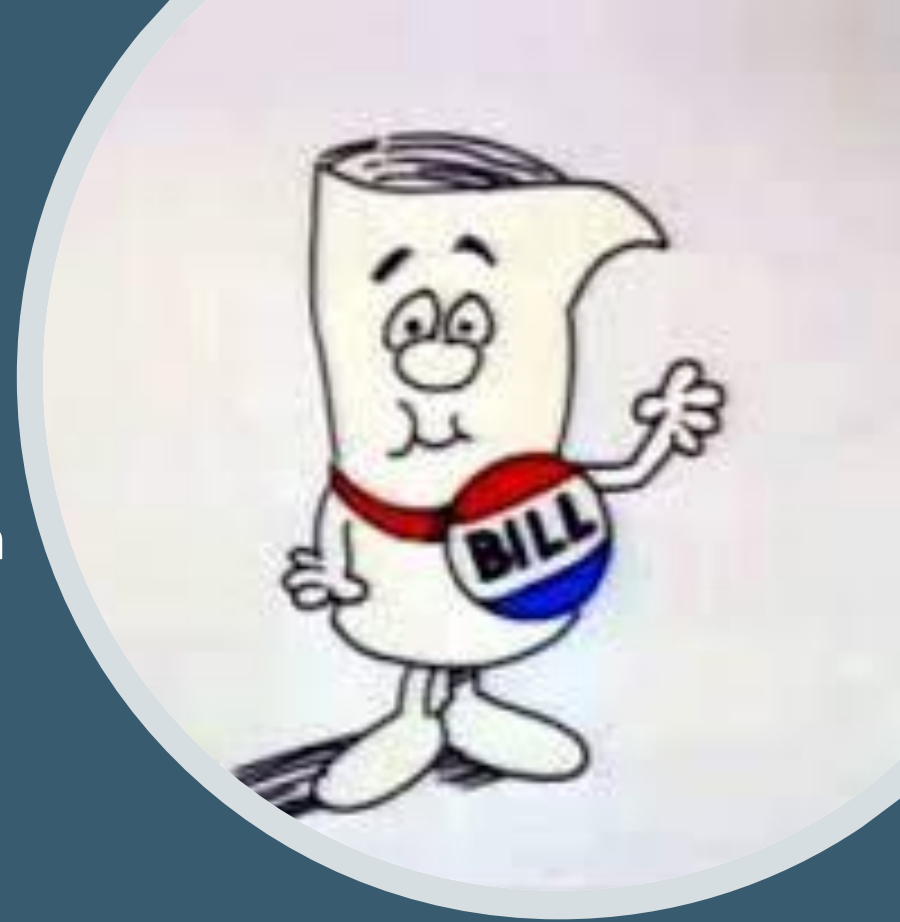
Both chambers of Congress are developing mental health packages

Social Justice Issues

- Gun violence prevention
- Bipartisan group of Senators led by Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT) and John Cornyn (R-TX) has been working for weeks to develop legislation that can get 60 votes in Senate. The compromise agreement – called the ***Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*** (see one page summary [here](#))– combines modest gun restrictions (e.g. incentivizing states to implement red flag laws, changing the background check system) with around \$15 billion in new funding for school security upgrades and mental health programs.
- Voting rights
 - Voting Rights legislation remains stalled in the United States Senate. In January of this year, Senate Majority Leader Schumer and Democrats attempted to advance the “Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act,” which combined elements of two House-passed bills: the “Freedom to Vote Act” and the “John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act”.
- Civil rights for LGBTQ+ people
 - Last Friday, President Biden issued an [Executive Order](#) to advance freedom and equality for all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals and lays out a plan to achieve these goals.
 - This important Executive Order seeks to counter the exponential rise of discrimination, violence, and stigma toward the LGBTQI+ community. A historic number of anti-LGBTQI+ [bills](#) have been introduced in state legislatures over the past year, many of them specifically targeting transgender children and their parents by banning access to medical care, participation in sports, and support at school.
- Reproductive rights
 - We expect a decision from the Supreme Court very soon.

Congressional Legislation

- How is legislation developed?
- How is input requested from NASW and other groups?
- How are stakeholders acknowledged when they help?
- Examples and tips...



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Congressional Bills

Safety.

- [Protecting Social Workers and Health Professionals from Workplace Violence Act \(S. 4412\)](#)

Student Loan Forgiveness.

- [Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) Payment Completion Fairness Act \(H.R. 7465\)](#)

Climate Change/Community Based Responses.

- [Resilience for All Act \(drafted but not yet introduced\)](#)

Congressional Bills (cont'd)

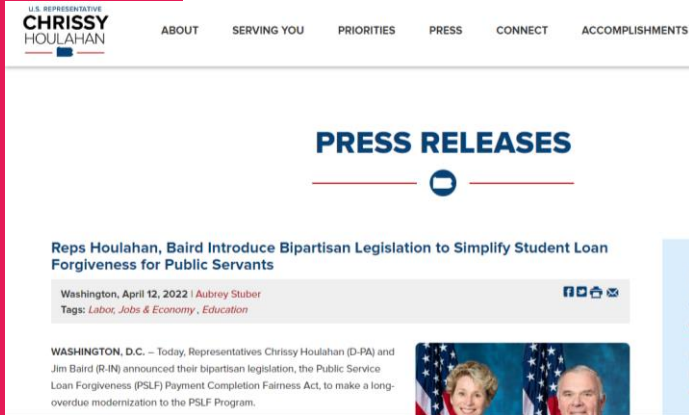
- Integrated Care
 - [Collaborate in an Orderly and Cohesive Manner Act \(H.R. 5218\)](#)
- School Based Social Work
 - [School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act \(H.R. 7037\)](#)
- Differential Response in Policing
 - [The Community-Based Response Act \(H.R. 3862/S. 2046\)](#)

Congressional Bills (cont'd)

Reimbursement and Scope of Practice in Medicare.

- [Improving Access to Mental Health Act \(H.R. 2035/ S. 870\)](#)
 - Increases Medicare Reimbursement Rate for Clinical Social Workers from 75% to 85% of the physician fee schedule.
 - Allows Clinical Social Workers to bill independently at Skilled Nursing Facilities.
 - Allows Clinical Social Workers to bill for Health and Behavior Assessment and Intervention services.
 - Nine cosponsors in the Senate; 54 in the House

Communications



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

U.S. SENATOR FOR MARYLAND

ABOUT

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

ISSUES

NEWS

CONTACT



JUNE 14, 2021

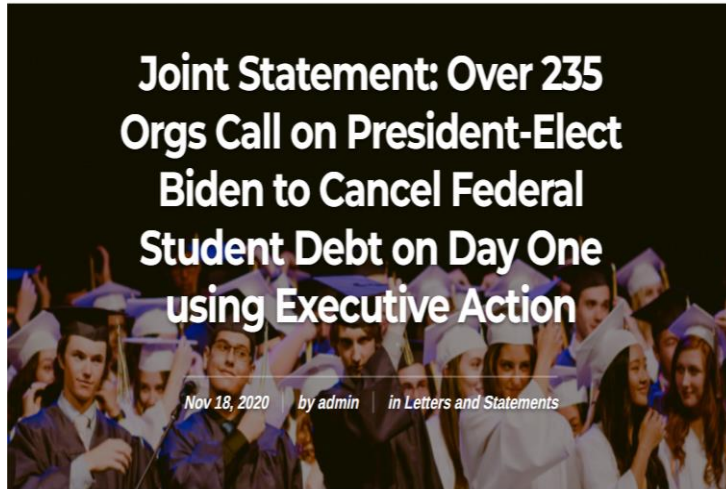
VAN HOLLEN, BASS REINTRODUCE COMMUNITY-BASED CRISIS RESPONSE LEGISLATION

Bill Aims to Create Alternatives to a Law Enforcement Response in Appropriate Situations

Today, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and U.S. Representative Karen Bass (D-Calif.) reintroduced their legislation to improve our emergency response capabilities by creating systemic alternatives to police involvement in appropriate situations. Their legislation, *The Community-Based Response Act*, creates a new Community-Based Emergency and Non-Emergency Response Grant Program through the Department of Health and Human Services to establish programs to encourage local governments to develop additional options, beyond law enforcement, for certain kinds of community-based emergency response. The bill will help provide for the dispatch of professionals trained in mental and behavioral health, crisis response, or mediation instead of law enforcement. Too often, dispatching law enforcement to emergencies where a use-of-force response is not warranted has resulted in unnecessary escalation and tragic death.

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Communications (cont'd)

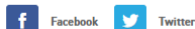


AFR Americans for Financial Reform



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Communications (cont'd)



Social workers press Democrats to make Child Tax Credit permanent

By CAITLIN OPRYSKO | 10/25/2021 06:41 PM EDT

With Daniel Lippman

SOCIAL WORKERS PRESS LAWMAKERS TO PERMANENTLY EXTEND CTC:

Hundreds of social workers, social work researchers and practitioners called on Congress today to permanently extend and make refundable the enhanced Child Tax Credit enacted in President **Joe Biden's** coronavirus relief package this spring, comparing the policy to the Great Depression-inspired Social Security program, which they called the country's "most important anti-poverty program."

— "In our daily work we see the impacts of economic instability and insufficient income on the lived experiences of children and their families," the social work experts [wrote in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, House](#)

POLITICO

ON THE HILL

FIRST IN PULSE: ADDICTION TREATMENT GROUPS BACK PAID LEAVE

PLAN — A coalition of addiction treatment organizations is calling on Democrats to preserve national paid leave as part of their social spending bill, arguing it would make it easier for people to seek treatment.

"Many working people, especially with low income, cannot access substance use disorder treatment simply because it requires time off from work," said Sarah Christa Butts, director of public policy for the National Association of Social Workers.

The group, which includes several West Virginia treatment organizations, also noted in its letter that efforts to combat the opioid epidemic have long been a top priority for Sen. Joe Manchin. Manchin has demanded that the bill's size and scope be reduced to win his vote, though he's yet to weigh in definitively on the prospect of including paid leave.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Brad Smith, a former Trump-era director of CMS' Innovation Center, is joining

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Congressional Briefings

School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act (H.R. 7037)


Sponsored by the School Social Work Association of America and the National Association of Social Workers, cosponsored by the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, the American Federation of Teachers, the Council on Social Work Education, the National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc, the Society for Social Work Research, American Council of School Social Work and the School Social Work Net, in collaboration with the Congressional Social Work Caucus.


JOIN US FOR A CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING


The Critical Need for School Social Workers:
Improving Student Success through H.R. 7037
*School Social Workers Improving Student
Success Act (H.R. 7037)*

★
Wednesday, March 30, 2022, 11:00am-12:00pm EDT
Register here: <https://sswaa.growthzoneapp.com/ap/Events/Register/QLm2B4qr?mode=Attendee>

★
Video Remarks from Congresswoman Gwen Moore (WI-04-D)
along with expert panelists




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National Association of Social Workers

 School Social Work
Association of America

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Comments, Statements and Sign-on Letters



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Sign-On Letters

NASW signs on to letters with coalition partners to demonstrate unity on an issue and to push for change.

2022 Sign-On Letters

- NASW signs onto letter to President Biden thanking him for his support of Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services and pushing for the \$150 billion investment in the program (3/22/2022)
- NASW signs onto coalition letter to Congressional leaders urging swift passage of the Child Poverty Reduction Act (H.R. 1558/S. 643) (3/14/2022)
- NASW signs onto PARCA letter to Administration officials in favor of a strong and enforceable provider



Comments & Statements

NASW signs on to letters to Congress and the Administration to promote our public policy goals. We also write statements and letters to the Administration on a wide range of policy issues.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Sign-On-Letters-Statements>

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Partnerships Are Critical

- NASW is part of a learning collaborative with the Legal Action Center (LAC). We partnered on a [Medicare Addiction Parity Project](#) and helped to develop the [Roadmap for Reform](#).
- LAC is now developing legislation that will be introduced in both chambers of congress and will include several of NASW's recommendations, re: workforce, reimbursement and parity in Medicare.



Our Policy Efforts: Facilitating Understanding of the Value of Social Work

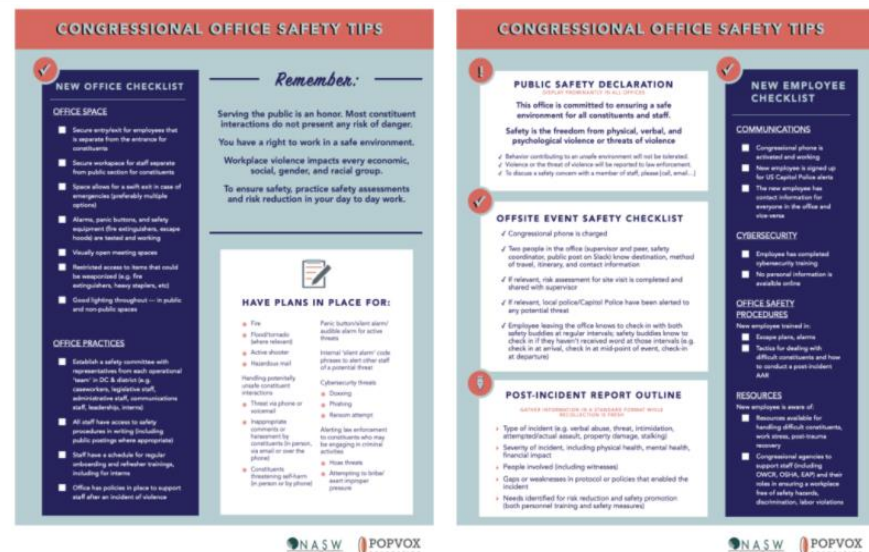
D N

Apr 27 • Written By Anne Meeker

What Congress Can Learn from Social Workers About Workplace Safety

As Congressional offices prepare to open to the public for the first time since the pandemic and with the January 6th attack still very much top of mind for many staffers, we turned to the [National Association of Social Workers](#) to learn from the experience of social workers.

[Click here](#) for a printable checklist for Congressional offices from NASW's safety guidance.



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Our Policy Efforts: Workforce Data

Secures Federal Government Study on the Social Work Workforce



National Social Work Organization Secures Federal Government Study on the Social Work Workforce

Jul 30, 2021

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), together with Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), a social worker and chair of the Congressional Social Work Caucus, have secured a comprehensive government study to be conducted on the social work workforce.

The study was ordered through the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, which was approved by the House Appropriations Committee on July 15. The report is to explore recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment, and provide recommendations and strategies to ensure a sufficient and strong social work workforce.

Millions of Americans are not receiving the mental, behavioral health and social care services they need, and

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Our Policy Efforts: Interstate Compact

- COVID-19 has underscored the need for increased access to health, mental health and social care services
- Telehealth expansion during COVID-19 is here to stay; site and geographic restrictions have been removed in Medicare, creating increased interest in interstate practice capability
- States must enact enabling legislation; social workers key in advocacy!
- Draft legislation public comment summer 2022
- Target date for initial states: 2024



**The Council
of State
Governments**

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Our Policy Efforts: Student Loan Debt Relief

- NASW's advocacy on student debt includes: forgiveness (Public Service Loan Forgiveness, PSLF waiver, IDR waiver), cancellation, employer sponsored student debt relief and other measures.
- [NASW submits comments to the Department of Education in response to Request for Information on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program](#) (Sept. 24, 2021)
- [NASW and the Student Borrower Protection Center submit memo to the Department of Education \(DoEd\) on behalf of Social Workers in response to DoEd's Request for Information on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) Program](#) (Sept. 17, 2021)
- NASW applauds Biden Administration for overhaul of troubled Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program (October 7, 2021)
- [NASW National along with 50 NASW Chapters sign onto the Student Borrower Protection Center coalition letter urging President Biden to Delay Restarting Student Loan Payments](#) (12/8/2021)
- [NASW signs onto letter to Secretary Cardona urging the Department of Education to create an Income-Driven Repayment waiver for student loan debt](#) (2/9/2022)
- [NASW, Student Borrower Protection Center and 11 other organizations submit comments to the Department of Education on Public Service Loan Forgiveness Reconsideration Request](#) (3/29/2022)

PSLF Waiver: Act Before October 2022



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
THE PUBLIC SERVICE
LOAN FORGIVENESS
WAIVER BY **OCT. 31**

Federal Student Aid
AN OFFICE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Have You Received PSLF Forgiveness?

- Have you received student loan debt forgiveness through the new PSLF waiver?
- NASW is partnering with the PSLF Coalition to collect stories from public service borrowers, including social workers to further inform our advocacy. Please complete the survey, if your student loans were forgiven:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr3i1lmXGDBDQ9Qlegto8prEiLDkh-9Y7_FpQcS46jRwbGQg/viewform



Our Policy Efforts: Influence Provisions of Forthcoming Congressional Bills

- [NASW submits comments in response to Senators Murray and Burr Request for Comment on the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act \(PREVENT Pandemics Act\)](#) (Feb. 4, 2022)
- [NASW Provides Recommendations to Senators Wyden and Crapo's Request for Policy Proposals to Address Unmet Mental Health Needs](#) (Nov. 15, 2021)
- [NASW's provides recommendations to Senators Murphy and Cassidy in response to a Request for Stakeholder Input Regarding Federal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Programs](#) (Nov. 5, 2021)
- [NASW provides Recommendations to Senators Bennet and Cornyn for Achieving the Aims of "A Bold Vision for America's Mental Well-being"](#) (Oct. 8, 2021)

Our Policy Efforts: Ohio Lawsuit

- NASW filed a lawsuit against the city of Lebanon, Ohio on May 11 to contest an ordinance passed in 2021 that prohibits abortion and criminalized aiding and abetting of abortions.
- NASW's specific concern is that the ordinance criminalized regular, ethical, competent practice of social work that often entails providing clients with informational, logistical, and emotional support for abortions. The ordinance lacked clarity and due process.
- On May 26 the city entered an agreement with us and Women Have Options to essentially decline to defend the ordinance.

PRESS RELEASE

As a Result of Litigation Brought by NASW-Ohio and WHO-Ohio, Lebanon Officials Decline to Defend Abortion Ban in Court; City Agrees to Stop Enforcement, Plans to Amend Ordinance

Plaintiffs are Represented by ACLU of Ohio and Democracy Forward

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Our Policy Efforts: Texas



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Importance of Macro Policy Practice Throughout the Career Continuum

- Encouraging and supporting Macro policy field placements
 - State Legislatures, Congress, Government Departments and Agencies
- Policy fellowships
 - Students, Practitioners, Faculty
- Washington, D.C. social work student visits



Macro Policy Fellowship Examples



CONGRESSIONAL PLACEMENT

Rep. Gregory Meeks

INTERESTS

Mental health care
inequity, Black
maternal health, and
education inequity

Paige Jones

Health Fellow

Paige Jones, LMSW is a professional MACRO social worker, who resides in Washington, D.C. Paige was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Paige earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Howard University and most recently, her Master's in Social Work from UMD-Baltimore. As a social worker in public policy, Paige looks forward to expanding the scope of what social workers can do and elevate the way we are perceived. By utilizing her clinical social work background, Paige hopes to push forward policy that has a holistic view of serving underserved Americans. Having recently completed a year-long public policy internship with the National Association of Social Workers, Paige worked on federal policy, advocacy, and research with a focus on racial inequality regarding somatic health, behavioral health, and the social determinants of health. Paige is deeply motivated and passionate about racial equity, justice, and health-related policy. Jones



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Macro Policy Fellowship Examples



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PORTAL

LACINDA JONES, LISW-S

Senior Social Worker, Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Puget Sound Health Care System

2021 Fellow



LaCinda Jones is a Senior Social Worker at the Department of Veterans Affairs. LaCinda works directly with Veterans affected by Traumatic Brain Injuries and Amputations, and is the facility coordinator for Advance Care Planning via Group visits. LaCinda's former role was as a social worker in the acute care hospital on the medical/surgical inpatient units. LaCinda serves a Co-Lead for the National Social Work Elder Abuse Tiger Team and is a member of the National Social Work field based work group for Advance Care Planning via Group visits at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Prior to working at the Department of Veterans Affairs, LaCinda worked for the Public Defender's Office as a forensic social worker developing alternative sentences for people who were incarcerated. LaCinda's interests are interdisciplinary collaboration, improving



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HillVets and WWP Announce Fellowship Selection



WASHINGTON, DC (Dec. 8, 2021) – Today the HillVets Foundation and Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) announced U.S. Navy veteran Kirsten Laha-Walsh as the recipient of the inaugural HillVets-WWP Fellowship.

"Kirsten Laha-Walsh is the perfect choice to be the first HillVets-Wounded Warrior Project Fellow. As a Navy veteran and caregiver for her retired Marine Corps spouse Purple Heart recipient, she has a passion for empowering and supporting wounded veterans," said HillVets Foundation Executive Director Betty Rhoades. "Kirsten just completed the HillVets LEAD program as part of Cohort 6, and we are so proud that she has chosen to continue her public policy and advocacy training. We're humble that she has put her trust in HillVets and Wounded Warrior Project, and we know she will make a big impact on the military-connected community."

Announced earlier this year, the HillVets-WWP Fellowship is unique in that the fellow will serve six months as a legislative fellow for the U.S. House For Country Caucus bipartisan group of members of Congress who are all U.S. military veterans. The fellowship will be followed by a six-month rotation working at WWP with the *Governance & Community Relations* team. The fellowship is open to post-9/11 veterans interested in pursuing a career in advocacy and public policy.

"After a fantastic experience in the LEAD Cohort, I was inspired and excited to move on to this incredible fellowship and partnership," Laha-Walsh said. "I look forward to continuing to advocate for military and veteran families and learn about macro policy on the national level."

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Macro Policy Fellowship Examples

2019-2020

- ***Liliane Windsor, PhD., MSW,*** associate professor, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana
 - ***Senator Durbin (D-IL)***



2020-2021

- ***Angela Perone, JD, MSW, MA,*** founding Executive Director, SAGE Metro Detroit, Ferndale, Michigan
 - ***Senator Baldwin (D-WI)***



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Health Policy Fellows

12



Social Work Expert Scholars and Practitioners Providing Input to the White House

Sarah Gehlert, PhD, MSW

- Appointed to White House Health Equity Advisory Role

Lee Westgate, MSW, MBA, LCSW-C

- NASW representative on the White House Healthcare Provider Stakeholder Coalition



Social Work In Action

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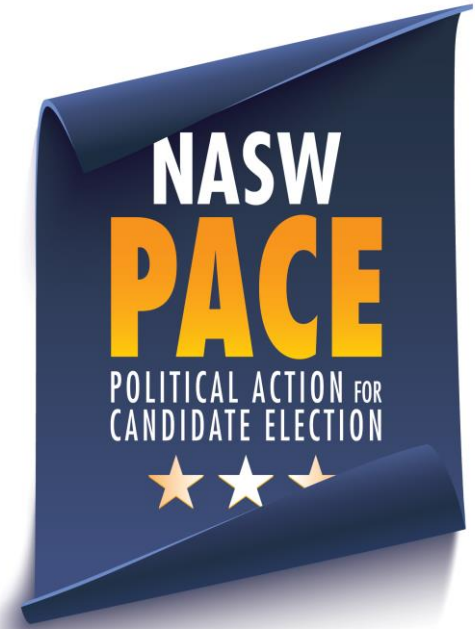
Systems Change

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Social Work PAC

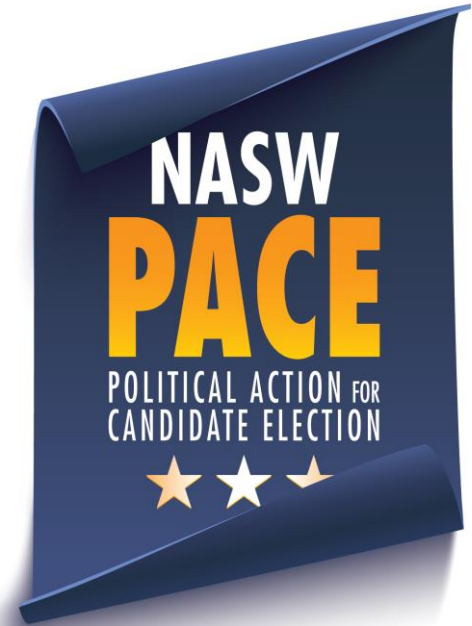
NASW PACE (PAC)

- We support members of Congress who share social work values and support our policy goals
- 43 State PACs



Social Work PAC (cont'd)

- NASW voter mobilization efforts
- 2022 Field organizers
 - Arizona
 - Colorado
 - Georgia
 - Pennsylvania
 - Wisconsin



We are Stronger Together



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



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Join Us!



**LIFT UP YOUR
SOCIAL WORK
VOICE!**

**Join the NASW
Advocacy Listserv**

Receive action alerts about our
priority legislation in Congress and
get involved with policy advocacy.

NASW
National Association of Social Workers

[SocialWorkers.org/Advocacy/
Legislative-Alerts](https://socialworkers.org/advocacy/legislative-alerts)

The graphic has a dark blue background with a stylized white outline of the US Capitol dome on the left. Several white stars of varying sizes are scattered across the background. A white lightbulb icon with radiating lines is positioned to the left of the main text. The text is in white, with the main heading in a larger, bold font. The NASW logo is at the bottom left, and the website link is at the bottom right.

Our advocacy efforts and our progress are not possible without you. Your voice holds power as a constituent, as a voter, and as a social worker.

**Social work has the power to
transform democracy!**

**Imagine the impact if the 700,000
social workers in the United States
engaged three voters... and then they
engaged three voters... and so on...**



<https://votingissocialwork.org/power-of-three/>

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