



January 24, 2018

Legislative Activities:

Tax Bill: As we rounded out 2017, the Tax bill, Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, passed Congress and became law. This law, which went into effect January 1, 2018, will produce a windfall for the “super rich,” while decimating safety-net programs that serve low-income elderly, children, and families.

Continuing Resolution (CR)/Budget/CHIP: In December, Congress passed a stopgap short-term Continuing Resolution or CR to fund the federal government until January 19, 2018. With no long-term budget solution in site, House Republicans took up another CR, which included a six-year extension for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and would delay various health care taxes for one or two years. This effort was fruitless however, as Democrats argued the need for a permanent Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) solution. With no agreement to the terms of a CR, our nation went into a three-day government shutdown.

Late on Monday, January 22, Congress reopened the government by passing a new CR (H.R. 195) lasting until February 8, 2018, under the promise that the Senate GOP agreed to take up a DACA/Immigration bill in the next month. While we are set to endure another budget fight, there is a silver lining as this CR included a six-year CHIP reauthorization. NASW has long championed CHIP reauthorization and is pleased to see a six-year extension adding stability to the health care coverage of nine million children and families. Check out [NASW’s website](#) for continued Congressional updates and alerts on this and other topics.

DACA/Dreamers Bill: Last year, the Trump Administration, put the onus of a DACA solution on Congress. With a March 5 deadline, bipartisan Senate negotiators have been working hard to find a compromise pairing a Dreamers path to citizenship with stronger security enhancements. This bipartisan framework, however, hit a roadblock when President Trump reversed his support for this bipartisan effort by issuing

disparaging remarks and anti-immigration rhetoric. With the renewed promise by the GOP during the most recent CR conversations, however, DACA and a Dreamers bill is back on the table.

NASW has strongly opposed President Trump's decision to rescind DACA and recognizes that abolishing DACA could impact 700,000-800,000 young people and their families. In fact, On December 19, 2017, NASW staff attended a rally and press conference in support of passage of the Dream Act. The rally included "Dreamers" who spoke about their plight. Speakers also included key members of the U.S Senate including Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT). The rally was organized by the Immigration Task Force, of which NASW is a member.

NASW will, with NASW members and partner organizations, continue to advocate for a permanent DACA solution.

Key Legislation: NASW staff continues to work on a Senate companion bill to *H.R. 1290-Improving Access to Mental Health Act*. Currently, *H.R.1290, the Improving Access to Mental Health Act* has [14 cosponsors](#). For more information on the bill please visit our website [here](#).

Later in the 2017, NASW posted an [action alert](#) for NASW members to urge their elected officials to cosponsor *H.R. 1484 the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017*. The response was overwhelming! Thank you for your advocacy efforts and we look forward to continued outreach as we work to gain additional cosponsors to this vital piece of legislation. A full list of current cosponsors for H.R. 1484 can be found [here](#).

NASW continues to push for support of *H.R. 1289, Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act*, which currently has [19 cosponsors](#).

RAISE Family Caregivers Act passes Congress; to be signed in to law

In early January, Congress passed the *Recognize, Assist, Include, Support and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act* (H.R. 3759). This bipartisan legislation, which was [supported by NASW](#) since its [introduction in the Senate](#) in 2015, requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop a national strategy to support the nation's 40 million family caregivers. The bill also creates a Family Caregiving Advisory Council to advise HHS; this council will include family caregivers, individuals with disabilities, older adults who use long-term services and supports, health and social service providers, employers, state and local officials, and others with expertise in family caregiving. The bill was sent to the President on January 10; he signed it into law.

Get involved! You can join [NASW's Advocacy Listserv](#) to stay up-to-date on Congressional activity. We also have [resources](#) on our web page to help in setting up visits with your members of Congress. For best practices on Congressional outreach, check out the [Indivisible Guide](#).

Administrative Activities

In December, [NASW submitted comments to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality regarding Noninvasive, Nonpharmacological Treatment for Chronic Pain](#). NASW also contributed to [comments](#) that were submitted by the Academy for Integrative Pain Management.

NASW meeting with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) NASW staff met with CMS staff in early January to discuss various issues affecting Medicare beneficiaries, especially the forthcoming new Medicare cards. Read NASW's [August 2017 Practice Alert](#) to learn more about the new cards.

Coalition and Collaborative Activities:

National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths

NASW staff participated in a National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths meeting. Agenda items included advocacy updates on Hill meetings and letters to Congress.

National Child Abuse Coalition

On January 11, 2018, NASW Staff attended National Child Abuse Coalition meeting. The discussion included updates on national organizations participating in legislative advocacy or education on child abuse and neglect issues and discussion of the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) as it may come up for reauthorization.

Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) – Special Interest Group on Child Welfare

On January 12, 2018, NASW staff attended SSWR's Special Interest Group on Child Welfare during their conference. John Sciamanna, Child Welfare League of America's (CWLA) Vice President of Public Policy, provided child welfare policy updates.

NASW is an active member of the **Families USA Protect Our Care Coalition**. NASW staff participate in weekly conference calls, monthly meetings and will be attending the Health Action conference in Washington DC in late January.

On December 1, 2017, **the Reentry Working Group** met for its monthly meeting to plan for 2018 criminal justice activities and priorities. It is anticipated that there will be a serious attempt by Sen. Grassley (R-IA), Chair of the Judiciary Committee, to reintroduce the Sentencing and Correctional Act of 2017. This is a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill that has bipartisan support. The working group is not certain when the bill will be introduced. The second legislative discussion dealt with the Bail Reform bill that was co-sponsored by Sens. Paul (R-KY) and Harris (D-CA). The bill is essentially legislation that funds several demonstration bail reform projects from states. Bail reform is an emerging national criminal justice priority.

On December 5, 2017, NASW staff participated in the **Segregation Roundtable** meeting. This is a quarterly meeting organized by Vera Institute of Justice to discuss and develop plans of action to reform the use of solitary confinement in federal and state prisons and jails. The Segregation Roundtable serves as a forum to promote safe alternatives to solitary confinement.

On December 6, 2017, social justice staff represented NASW at the **Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights (LCCR)** annual membership meeting and reception. This is an annual event that brings together members of the LCCR coalition. The event is used to discuss prior year's successes and the priorities for 2018. NASW is an active LCCR member.

On December 7, 2017 NASW staff met with Julie Kruse from the **Coalition of Fair Adoption**, a national LGBTQ organization with which NASW has collaborated in the recent past. The primary issue for the

collaboration is to combat discrimination against gay adoptions based on so-called religious freedoms of public and private adoption agencies to deny the adoption because of their opposition to LGBTQ adoptions. NASW will collaborate on a second anti-adoption discrimination campaign with the group.

On December 11, 2017, NASW staff participated in a Brown Bag lunch meeting held by the **National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA)**. Experts presented on the issue of maintaining Medicaid for individuals serving short-term stays in jail. The presentation and ensuing discussion also covered the need for flexible and innovative policies that reduced the number of justice involved individuals that lose Medicaid coverage while in jail. This is a critical concern for persons with serious mental illness and/or chronic medical conditions.

On December 11, 2017, NASW staff participated in a meeting between prison reform advocates and the newly confirmed administrator of the **Bureau of Prisons (BOP)**. This meeting served as an introduction of the BOP administrator to community advocacy groups. NASW is a regular member of the prison reform working group. NASW staff led the discussion of mental health and restrictive housing (solitary confinement) within the federal prison system. The meeting was cordial and mutually respectful. It ended with a promised regular quarterly meeting between the administrator and our advocacy group.

On December 18, 2017, NASW staff met with representatives from the **Brady Campaign Against Gun Violence**. The meeting was the initial stage of a three-pronged collaboration: (1) to disseminate Brady materials on gun-safety to prevent gun deaths in children; (2) to jointly write and disseminate a social justice brief on gun violence with a heavy emphasis on prevention and advocating to reasonable gun ownership laws; and (3) to connect NASW California Chapter with the Brady Campaign California affiliate on state-specific gun law effort. We agreed to move forward with finalizing this collaborative plan.

NASW participated in meetings of the following coalitions or other external initiatives:

- Eldercare Workforce Alliance
- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations
- Reframing Elder Abuse Committee
- Social Work Long-Term Services and Supports Network
- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations
- Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- Coalition on Human Needs
- Mental Health Liaison Group
- National Coalition to End Child Abuse Deaths
- National Child Abuse Coalition
- Protect Our Care Coalition
- Medicaid Coalition
- Elder Justice Coalition

NASW Resources

NASW staff created a new **Health Practice Resource: Be Alert to Tobacco Advertisements**. Social workers should be aware that from November 2017 through March 2018, tobacco companies are issuing “corrective statements” about the negative health effects of smoking.

Briefings

NASW staff attended a briefing on **Discrimination in America: Solutions for Health**, hosted by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & NPR that focused on a study of individual experiences with discrimination and solutions to address discrimination in the United States. Reports are available [here](#).

Items of Note

Fellowship Opportunity in Aging and Health Policy The [Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program](#) invites social workers to apply for the 2018–2019 program year. The program, which is supported by the Atlantic Philanthropies and the John A. Hartford Foundation and is not affiliated with NASW, equips professionals to influence the development and implementation of [health policies that affect older adults](#). Interested individuals may apply to do a residential option (consisting of nine to 12 months in Washington, D.C. or at a state agency) or to do a one-year nonresidential option in their current organizations. [Informational calls](#) for potential applicants will be held biweekly through March 26; [applications](#) are due by April 15, 2018.

Support Letters:

NASW has signed onto a number of letters of support. You can find a list of letters of support on our [web page](#). A sample of recent letters is listed below.

- [NASW signs onto Leadership Conference Letter asking Department of Commerce Secretary Ross to Oppose Department of Justice Request to Add a Citizenship Question to the 2020 Census \(1/10/2018\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to open letter opposing the nomination of Alex Azar to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(1/3/2018\)](#)
- [NASW contributes to comments with the Academy of Integrative Pain Management and partner organizations to AHRQ regarding Noninvasive, Nonpharmalogical Treatment for Chronic Pain \(12/21/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter supporting the Patient Choice and Quality Care Act \(S. 1334/H.R. 2797\) \(12/20/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs on to Families USA letter urging Congress to address the health crises in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands \(12/18/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto letter of support for the Courtney Amendment that would protect the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program \(12/12/2017\)](#)
- [NASW signs onto MHLG letter opposing specific provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act \(12/7/2017\)](#)

- [NASW signs on to Leadership Council of Aging Organizations letter urging the Administration for Community Living to retain data collection on gender identity within the 2019 National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants \(11/27/2017\)](#)

NASW has also submitted its own comments to the Administration and Congress. You can find this list on our [web page](#) as well.

- [NASW submits comments to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality regarding Noninvasive, Nonpharmacological Treatment for Chronic Pain \(Dec. 15, 2017\)](#)
- [NASW submits comments to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation regarding the center's proposed new direction \(Nov. 17, 2017\)](#)