

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Issue: Cosponsor and Support Passage of the Social Worker Safety Act of 2017 (H.R. 1484)

BACKGROUND

Every day social workers across this country provide a wide range of services in increasingly complex environments including child welfare agencies, schools, mental health centers and hospitals. Safety can be a concern in many of these settings. Social workers are often engaging in risky situations without proper safety training, a partner or limited safety equipment. Unfortunately, too many social workers have been the targets of verbal and physical assaults and some have even tragically lost their lives while performing their job responsibilities.

The importance of social work safety is often overlooked. Bipartisan Social Worker Safety legislation has been introduced that will address these safety needs by:

- » Establishing a Social Worker Safety Grant Program within the Department of Health and Human Services to fund State's efforts to improve safety measures for social workers.
- » Allowing these grants to be used to purchase safety equipment, make facility improvements, facilitate safety training programs, provide support services for social workers who have been victims of violence, or track incident data to mitigate future offenses against social workers.

Through this legislation, social workers, who have consistently been the frontline workers especially in times of crisis, will have the resources available for on-the-job safety measures that can protect against and help decrease incidence of violence to those in the social work profession.

The Social Worker Safety Act of 2017 (H.R. 1484) was introduced in the 115th Congress on March 9, 2017, by social worker Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ-9) and Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21). This bipartisan legislation provides an opportunity for Congress to address a critical need in our country.

POLICY SOLUTION

Cosponsor and support the passage and funding of the Social Worker Safety Act (H.R. 1484) to help protect social workers as they perform much needed work in the community.

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