



# What's in the NASW Federal Blueprint

The NASW Federal Policy Framework for the 119th Congress lays out a bold and strategic roadmap to protect, promote, and invest in the social work profession while advocating for policies that advance social justice, equity, and the well-being of the communities we serve. These talking points ensure consistency in our messaging across all NASW advocacy efforts.

# Strengthening the Social Work Workforce

**Key Message:** The nation's growing mental health crisis demands a well-trained, diverse, and financially stable social work workforce. Investing in social workers is essential to meeting community needs.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Establish a Congressional AI Commission to ensure artificial intelligence augments (not replaces) social workers.
- › Expand federal grants and low-interest loans to support women- and minority-owned private practices in mental health.
- › Protect and strengthen the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program and expand the Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act.
- › Increase Medicare reimbursement rates to fairly compensate clinical social workers.

# Defending Democracy & Protecting Voting Rights

**Key Message:** A strong democracy requires fair and equitable access to voting. NASW supports policies that safeguard democracy and prevent voter suppression.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Advocate for federal voting rights protections and expanded access to early voting and mail-in ballots.
- › Combat misinformation and disinformation that disproportionately suppresses Black, Brown, and low-income voters.
- › Invest in civic engagement programs that mobilize social workers and communities to participate in the electoral process.

# Economic Justice & Paid Leave

**Key Message:** Social workers fight for economic policies that uplift working families and address racial wealth gaps. Paid leave, fair wages, and strong labor protections are essential.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Pass the FAMILY Act, Healthy Families Act, and Job Protection Act to establish universal paid family and medical leave.

- › Expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to reduce child poverty and provide financial stability for families.
- › Oppose tax cuts for the wealthy that strip funding from social service programs.

# Protecting & Expanding Social Services

**Key Message:** Social service programs are lifelines for millions of Americans. NASW advocates for fully funded, accessible, and equitable support systems.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Increase funding for Early Head Start, Head Start, and the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to make quality childcare affordable and accessible.
- › Reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to strengthen child welfare services.
- › Expand and make permanent telehealth flexibilities to ensure mental health care access, especially for rural and underserved communities.

# Mental Health & Healthcare Access

**Key Message:** Mental health is healthcare. NASW supports policies that ensure everyone—regardless of income, race, or location—has access to quality mental health care.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Pass the Improving Access to Mental Health Act to expand Medicare coverage and reimbursement for clinical social workers.
- › Make telehealth coverage for mental health permanent and remove outdated in-person visit requirements.
- › Ensure mental health parity in all federal and state insurance programs.

# Immigration & Human Rights

**Key Message:** Immigrants are vital members of our communities. NASW opposes mass deportations and supports policies that protect immigrant families.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Support comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.
- › Oppose policies that separate families and criminalize asylum seekers.
- › Expand access to mental health services for immigrant and refugee populations.

# Social Work Safety & Workplace Protections

**Key Message:** Social workers must be protected from violence, harassment, and unsafe working conditions.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Pass the Social Work Safety Act to establish national workplace safety standards.
- › Secure federal funding for de-escalation training and emergency response programs for social workers.
- › Advocate for stronger labor protections, fair wages, and collective bargaining rights for social workers.

## Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Social Work

**Key Message:** AI should support social work, not replace human-centered care.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Establish a federal AI commission to regulate AI use in social services and healthcare.
- › Prevent AI-driven racial bias and ensure social workers maintain professional decision-making authority.
- › Develop ethical AI standards that prioritize transparency, equity, and social justice.

## Federal Regulatory & Executive Branch Advocacy

**Key Message:** The executive branch plays a crucial role in shaping policies that impact social workers and the communities they serve. NASW actively engages with federal agencies to drive policy change.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Strengthen collaboration with HHS, HUD, and the Department of Education to expand funding for social services.
- › Advocate for executive actions that protect civil rights, expand social worker funding, and reinforce safety net programs.
- › Push for strong enforcement of anti-discrimination policies in federal agencies.

## Holding Policymakers Accountable

**Key Message:** NASW is a policy watchdog, ensuring that elected officials uphold their commitments to social justice.

**Policy Focus:**

- › Track congressional voting records on social work and social justice issues.
- › Mobilize NASW members to participate in advocacy efforts, including letter-writing campaigns, town halls, and NASW Advocacy Days.
- › Publish quarterly federal policy reports detailing wins, setbacks, and ongoing advocacy efforts.

## CALL TO ACTION

**NASW members and advocates are encouraged to:**

- ✓ Contact elected officials to push for NASW policy priorities.
- ✓ Join NASW's advocacy efforts through grassroots organizing and digital campaigns.
- ✓ Stay informed and share NASW policy updates within your networks.

NASW is committed to protecting, promoting, and investing in the social work profession—not just for today, but for future generations. Together, we can drive systemic change and build a more just and equitable society.



750 First Street, NE Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20002  
**SOCIALWORKERS.ORG**

### About NASW

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance sound social policies.