How to Strengthen the Profession's Impact in Public Policy

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

Mildred "Mit" Joyner, DPS, MSW, LCSW President, NASW Pronouns: she/ her/ hers

April 4, 2022



Agenda

- Welcome
- NASW's Federal Policy Portfolio
- State of Play in Washington, D.C.
- Translating Research to Policy
- Progress Made
- Recommendations
- Reflections from President Mildred "Mit" Joyner on Social Justice
- Q and A

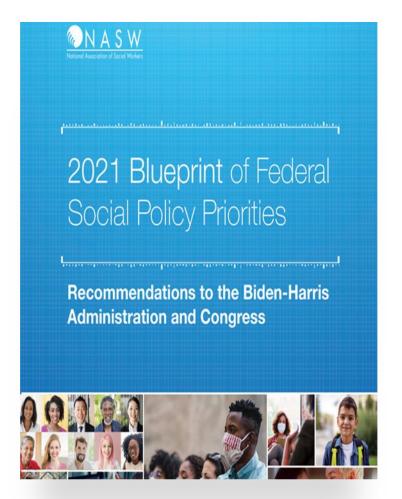


Events Leading to This Presentation

- Gehlert, S., Manderscheid, R., Teasley, M., McClain, A., & Butts, S. (2020, January 15–19) Leveraging social work research expertise to influence public policy to improve American's wellbeing. Virtual conference presentation for the Society for Social Work and Research. Retrieved from https://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2020/webprogram/Session10940.html
- Butts, S., Coffey, D., Manderscheid, R., Singer, J., & Walters, K. (2021, January 19–22). Advocacy and public policy formation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual conference presentation for the Society for Social Work and Research. Retrieved from https://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2021/webprogram/Session11784.html
- Butts, S., Windsor, L. & Phelps, C. (2021, November 4-7). Creating a pipeline of influence through macro policy field placements. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Orlando, Florida.
- Leadership Roundtable meeting in December 2021.



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



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 wellrepresented – but we need more!
- Executive branch: White House
- Judicial: Courts



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 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 Policy Portfolio

Workforce Advocacy Priorities

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

Social Justice Priorities

- Healthcare Equity
- Economic Justice
- Criminal/Juvenile Justice
- Political Justice
 - Voting Rights
- Immigration Justice
- Climate Justice
- Ending Racism

Racial equity is the "through line"



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

President Biden's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget was released on March 28th; includes significant Mental Health Care Reforms

- The **budget proposal calls for full mental health parity** and would:
 - remove limits on the scope of services for which Clinical Social Workers can be paid by Medicare
 - modernize Medicare's mental health benefits and improve behavioral health for the private insurance market and Medicaid beneficiaries
- The president's budget request also includes \$50 million for burnout prevention in the health care workforce. HHS says this investment would provide support for the remaining health care workforce and could improve both retention and recruitment for the future.



President Biden's Budget (cont'd)

- The budget includes measures to increase access to mental and behavioral health services in underserved areas as well as investments to grow and diversify the workforce to deliver high-quality, culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services.
 - \$397 million for Behavioral Health Workforce Programs
 - \$10 million for a Rural Health Clinic Behavioral Health Initiative to allow clinics in rural areas where there are no existing behavioral health providers to fund the salary of a behavioral health provider including social workers
 - Expanded funding for community health centers, including investing new resources in embedding early childhood development experts.
 - \$50 million for Preventing Burnout in the Health Workforce.
 - \$7.5 billion demonstration to improve provider capacity in Medicaid to address mental health treatment.



President Biden's Budget

- \$7.5 billion for a new Mental Health System Transformation Fund with goals of:
 - Increasing access to mental health services through workforce development and service expansion
 - Development of non-traditional health delivery sites
 - Integration of quality mental health and substance use care into primary care settings
 - Dissemination of evidence-based practices

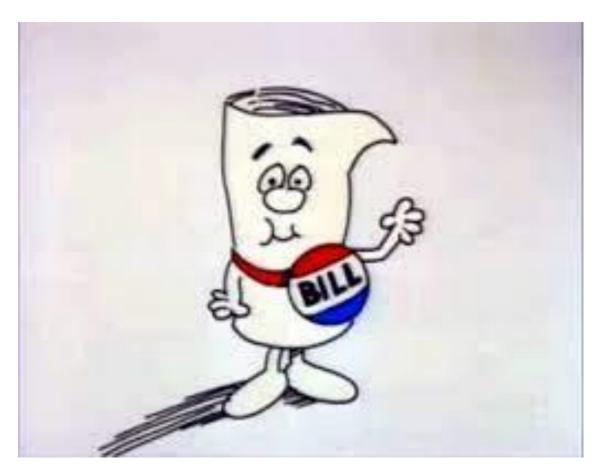


Additional Key Developments

- 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%2022.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



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...



Congressional Bills That NASW Has Helped to Develop

- Improving Access to Mental Health Act (H.R. 2035/ S. 870)
- Collaborate in an Orderly and Cohesive Manner Act (H.R. 5218)
- School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act (H.R. 7037)
- The Community-Based Response Act (H.R. 3862/S. 2046)
- Protecting Social Workers and Health Professionals from Workplace
 Violence Act
- Resilience for All Act (draft, not introduced)
- Others have not yet been introduced, some may not get introduced



Communications



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.



Communications (cont'd)

Joint Statement: Over 235
Orgs Call on President-Elect
Biden to Cancel Federal
Student Debt on Day One
using Executive Action

Nov 18, 2020 by admin in Letters and Statements

"Many social workers and other essential healthcare workers on the frontlines of the pandemic are saddled with student loan debt. Social workers are providing critical mental and behavioral health services and social needs care to underserved communities and they are required to have a high level of education to practice and are among the lowest-paid professionals in the workforce," said Sarah Christa Butts, MSW, director of Public Policy, National

AFR Americans for Financial Reform



Association of Social Workers

Communications (cont'd)



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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

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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.

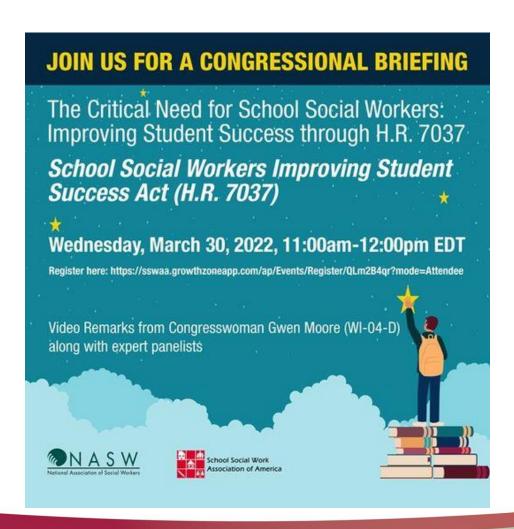
The group, which includes several West Virginia treatment organizations, also noted in its letter that efforts to combat the opioid epidemic have long been a top priority for Sen. Joe Manchin. Manchin has demanded that the bill's size and scope be reduced to win his vote, though he's yet to weigh in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



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.



Comments, Statements and Sign-on Letters





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.

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



Partnerships Are Critical



- NASW is part of a learning collaborative with the Legal Action Center (LAC) and partners on a <u>Medicare Addiction Parity Project</u> 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 a number of NASW's recommendations, re: workforce, reimbursement and parity in Medicare.

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





Apr 27 • Written By Anne Meeker

What Congress Can Learn from Social Workers About Workplace Safety

Congressional offices prepare to open to the public for the first time since the pandemic and th the January 6th attack still very much top of mind for many staffers, we turned to the National sociation 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.









NASW POPVOX

Our Policy Efforts: Workforce Data



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

Secures first ever Federal Government Study on the Social Work Workforce



preferred tool to promote workforce mobility and multistate economic development,

contracts between or among states. In 2017. states continued to pass compact legislation and reciprocity across state lines. Twenty-one states adopted 30 bills approving interstate professions—physical therapists and emergen cy medical technicians—saw their compacts ome operational, and states continued to join the new Enhanced Nurse Licensure and Interstate Medical Licensure compacts.

I think it is fair to say we've had a reawakening of interest in interstate compacts gener ally and particularly in the area of interstate portability for occupational licensing, partic ularly within the health professions," said Rick Masters, special counsel to the CSG National Center for Interstate Compacts.

Masters noted the ability of compacts to adapt to all licensed professions. He said states are looking to expand compacts "into other licensed professions that may or may not require college training or graduate degrees but that nonetheless are equally im

sion, or PTCC, and the Recognition of EMS sonnel Licensure Interstate CompAct, or states and created interstate commissions in 2017. REPLICA Executive Director Sue Prentiss believes that in addition to easing the ability of emergency responders to serve patients, REPLICA is "an advancement for our profession from the perspective of creating transparency and portability across state lines where patients need access, and the closest EMS personnel may be across a state line. It reduces barriers for folks that have to carry licenses in multiple states."

Jeff Rosa with The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy sees the new physical

'We are able to really address some of the issues related to portability and mobility in not just physical therapy, but a lot of health care professions," Rosa said. "The compact is letting us really be able to address that physical therapy services will be able to have better access to needed services."

driving force today, interstate compacts can help states with a wide range of issues where multistate cooperation is crucial. A key area in 2017 where compacts played an integral role for states was disaster recovery. With three major hurricanes hitting the United States and its territories in September, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, or EMAC, took the lead in coordinating

Emergency Manageme NEMA. According to NE Trina Sheets, EMAC is th through which states ca "EMAC provides protect

are deployed including sation, tort liability, rein those legal protections ers that are deployed t those resources has the of those that are comin either accept or reject t

While EMAC responds t the same level of attent Florida and Texas. "Hurricane Katrina was t

for EMAC in its history," active season that we h As of September, nearly been deployed to Flori and "those numbers wil Sheets said.

The diversity of issues b by interstate compacts

- 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!
- Target date for initial states: 2024

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)



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)



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

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 yearlong 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







Macro Policy Fellowship Examples



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Media

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HOME HEALTH AND AGING POLICY

FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION >

THE FELLOWS >

PROGRAM NEWS

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 Vete works directly with Veterans affected by Traumatic Brain Injuries is the facility coordinator for Advance Care Planning via Group vis

units. LaCinda serves a Co-Lead for the National Social Work Eldeand veteran families and learn about macro policy on the national level." 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 interest are interdisciplinary collaboration, improving social work

HillVets and WWP Announce Fellowship Selection

role was as a social worker in the acute care hospital on the medic: 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



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 and 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 humbled 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, a 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 Government & Community Relations team. The fellowship is open to post-9/11 veterans interested in pursuing a career in advocacy and public policy.



Macro Policy Fellowship Examples

- **2019-2020**
- Liliane Windsor, Ph.D., M.S.W., associate professor, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana/ Senator Durbin (D-IL)
- **2**020-2021
- Angela Perone, J.D., M.S.W., M.A., founding executive director, SAGE Metro Detroit, Ferndale, Michigan /Senator Baldwin (D-WI)









Social Work Expert Scholars and Practitioners Providing Input to White House

Sarah Gehlert, PhD, MSW

Appointed to White House Health Equity Advisory

Panel



Lee Westgate, MSW, MBA, LCSW-C
Representative on the White House Healthcare
Provider Stakeholder Coalition





Social Work PAC



- NASW PACE (PAC)
 - We support members of Congress who share social work values and support our policy goals
- NASW voter mobilization efforts
- Field organizers
- 43 State PACs



Recommendations

- Accelerate the translation of research to policy and practice
- Strive for collective impact in policy across the profession
- Focus on opportunities to encourage, facilitate and celebrate Macro policy practice through policy internships and fellowships
- Prioritize media coverage of Social Work and our research via op-eds, newspaper articles, etc. related to public policy
- Promote student visits by schools of social work to Washington, D.C.
- Hill Days for social work faculty and practitioners
 - SSWR and CSWE should host hill days when conferences are in Washington, D.C.
- Explore how collective impact in policy may be achieved through joint membership opportunities among social work organizations



Recommendations

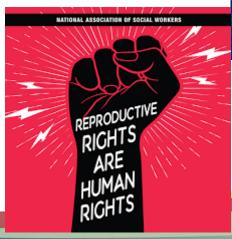
- Facilitate understanding of the value of professional associations in federal and state advocacy and encourage students to join as student members of NASW
- Nominate social workers (scholars and practitioners) for government leadership roles
- Nominate social work Macro practitioners for awards. They need multidisciplinary recognition to rise in their practice area
- Encourage Social workers to serve on the boards of influential D.C. based policy organizations and coalitions and be recognized by the profession for doing so
- Work to get the MSW listed in Congressional and state legislature staff job postings



Reflections From NASW President Mildred "Mit" Joyner Calling on Social Workers To Lead In Social Justice











White House Executive Briefing- Social Work is Essential – July 2021











Social Work In Action









We are Stronger Together

























Council on Social Work Education

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF **DEANS AND DIRECTORS** SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK



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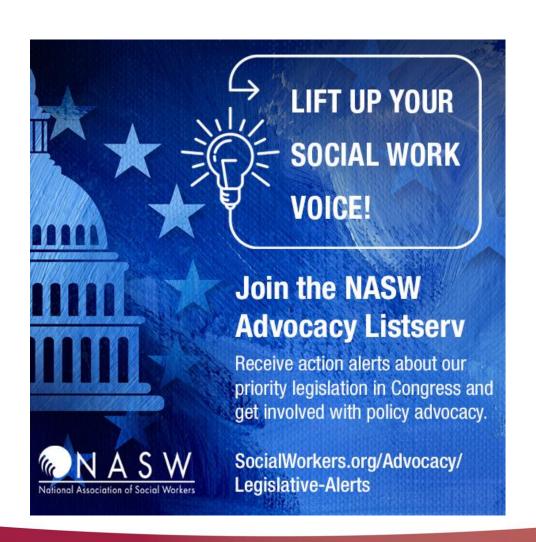


Resources

- NASW's Blueprint of Federal Social Policy Priorities
 https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Policy-Issues/2021-Blueprint-of-Federal-Social-Policy-Priorities
- NASW Legislative Alerts https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Alerts
- CSWE's Policy Agenda https://www.cswe.org/Advocacy-Policy/Policy-Agenda#Education
- Description of CSWE's Public Policy Initiative: https://www.cswe.org/advocacy-policy-agenda/about-ppi/



Join Us!





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

