NASW/CT 2015 Legislative Priorities

❖ Protecting the Safety Net for Connecticut’s Most Vulnerable Citizens and Fighting for Family Economic Security

NASW/CT holds the position that every Connecticut resident and family should be able to meet their basic human needs. In this spirit, NASW/CT opposes cuts to safety net programs that serve Connecticut’s most vulnerable populations, and supports proposals that prevent individuals from falling into poverty.

NASW/CT supports paid family leave legislation that expands current family medical leave in such a way that it can be utilized by caregivers who are currently unserved as they cannot afford to take unpaid leave.

❖ Promoting Access to Comprehensive Community Based Mental Health Services in Every Community Along the Life Span

NASW/CT supports the expansion of School Based Health Centers (SBHC) across Connecticut. School Based Health Centers provide an effective means of reaching children, especially in low income communities, to provide needed health services. NASW/CT supports SBHCs that include mental health services, and the expansion of School Based Mental Health Services. NASW/CT’s position is that the current statutory definition of SBHC’s should designate licensed social workers as the primary provider of mental health services. NASW/CT supports having school social workers in every public school.

NASW/CT supports parity of Mental Health treatment across the spectrum of insurance plans, thereby supporting legislation that will require private insurance to expand mental health coverage to better mirror the public insurance coverage.

❖ Ensuring that Connecticut Residents Have Access to a Full Array of Options with Regard to End of Life Decisions.

As an association whose Code of Ethics includes the dignity of each person and individual’s right to self-determination, NASW/CT continues to support legislation that expands options and choice in end of life decisions including measures that would allow a terminally ill individual compassionate aid in dying. NASW also supports legislation that upholds individuals’ advanced directives.

❖ Protecting and Strengthening the Profession
NASW/CT supports legislation that expands opportunities for professional social workers including any legislation that promotes social workers as the provider of choice in an integrated health system of health and mental health.

- **Promoting Appropriate Consideration of Juvenile Status**
  NASW/CT supports the revision of Connecticut’s statutes to be in keeping with the U.S. Supreme Court decision that it is unconstitutional to not allow a court to take juvenile status into consideration during sentencing. It is NASW/CT’s position that Connecticut should pass legislation creating criteria that allows for consideration of parole for an inmate who committed a crime as a juvenile, was sentenced without parole and is now an incarcerated adult.

- **Empowering Connecticut’s Transgender Population**
  NASW/CT supports legislation that will allow transgender individuals to have their birth certificate gender designation changed without regard to whether they have undergone gender change surgery.

- **Strengthening the Mental Health Workforce**
  NASW/CT supports legislation that will strengthen or create loan reimbursement programs for social workers in order to enhance the mental health workforce in Connecticut.