



NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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2018 Legislative Agenda

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Connecticut Chapter priorities are designed to make progress toward the NASW 2016 Grand Challenges of tackling our nation's toughest social problems. Such challenges include: Ensuring healthy development of all youth; Closing the health gap; Ending family violence; Advancing long and productive lives; Eradicating social isolation; Ending homelessness; Creating social responses to a changing environment; Harnessing technology for social good; Promoting smart decarceration; Building financial capability for all; Reducing extreme economic inequality; and achieving equal opportunity and justice.

The Education for Legislative Action Network (ELAN) committee pledges to support legislation filed in this session that meet our approved priorities in coordination with CT advocacy coalitions (when appropriate). ELAN pledges to initiate legislation in cooperation with CT legislators and our members along with paying close attention to the CT state budget to rectify core safety net services modified or cut in the 2017 session and any further cuts that arise in 2018. In addition, ELAN in 2018 is committed to enhanced methods of education of our members, ourselves as a committee, the public and state legislators on issues covered by our approved priorities. This includes supporting NASW in promoting legislation and opposing defunding or cuts in safety net programs by the US Senate and House of Representatives.

All Encompassing Proposed Legislative Goals and Priorities for NASW CT this Legislative Session are as follows:

A- Protecting the Safety Net for Connecticut's Most Vulnerable Populations:

NASW/CT holds the position that every Connecticut resident and family should be able to meet their basic human needs. NASW/CT opposes cuts to safety net programs that serve Connecticut's most vulnerable populations and supports proposals that prevent individuals and families from falling into poverty with little to no, or inadequate resources to self-sufficiency.

B- Supporting the Development of New Revenue Sources and Appropriating Revenue from Existing Taxes:

These economic issues are to specifically focus on maintaining safety net services, employment, mental health and substance abuse programs, or preventions programs. Such revenues or reallocation sources might include:

voluntary tax contribution for additional mental health service funding or offering a vanity plate ("CT Cares"), tax reform that balances the amount of taxes paid by the state's poorest and wealthiest, "sunsetting" of various tax breaks, reinstating the luxury tax, re-configuring tobacco tax or revenue from casinos to mental health and addiction services, reallocating funds from incarceration to decarceration such as risk assessment, taxes on opioid drug companies used for substance abuse treatment, promoting an equitable formula for state school funding, regionalization of public services, and instituting results-based accounting.

C- Working with NASW on Federal Legislation:

ELAN plans to work with National to activate NASW/CT members to act on Action Alerts from National and build relationships with CT US representatives and senators on national issues. The legislation currently identified for support are: Medicare Reimbursement, Affordable Care Act Integration, Student Loan Forgiveness, Social Work Reinvestment Act, Older American Act, Child Welfare, Mental Health, the Social Work Safety Act and Social Work Advocacy.

D- NASW/CT Professional Guild, Education, & Research Issues for 2018:

Educational campaigns proposed this year are:

1. Title protection for BSW and MSWs with preparation of a bill and discussion with NASW members and legislators.
2. Voter engagement education in all levels of government and educating members on the importance of each member having a relationship and/or contact with their elected representatives.
3. Education on the electoral college and efforts to reform and/or eliminate.

Research and education issues that we hope to study, gather research on and educate members as well as the public and legislators during the 2018 legislative session include, but are not limited to:

1. Advantages and disadvantages of regionalization of services
2. Scope and role of services delivered through the TANF Funds Plan & Medicaid State Plan
3. Inequities in the state pension formula
4. Affordable health care and mental health and physical health services parity
5. Coordinating community-based and VA services for domestic violence, trauma, and sexual harassment victims

Legislative Categories

NASW/CT will work on specific bills that we determine fit into the following issues categories.

Social Justice

NASW CT supports legislation that promotes: environmental climate justice and green energy; respect for adoption rights for adoptees; LGBTQIA rights and inclusive language in state statutes; women's right to birth control and any/all

reproductive health services in CT. Access to prevention and early treatment options for teenagers, young adults, adults and families struggling with substance abuse, particularly: opioid addiction, parity in mental health/substance abuse treatment, police training on mental health, crisis intervention such as the Mental Health First Aid and suicide prevention. Particular attention will be paid to legislation that ensures all residents are treated equally and with respect in all areas of their lives.

Economic Justice

NASW/CT supports legislation that promotes: accelerating livable minimum wages; equalizing the educational cost sharing formula; increased funds to Care4Kids and quality affordable day care; TANF funding for basic education with particular emphasis on residents already receiving TANF and/or DSS services; continued access to affordable comprehensive health care with a higher income threshold for working parents to access Medicaid/Husky; and use of TANF funds to provide support for residents in seeking future employment.

Criminal Justice Reform

NASW/CT supports legislation that promotes: prevention of suicide gun violence; bail reform; support of family court support services programs; criminal sentencing reform; increase in availability of mental health services during probation and incarceration; integration of services of crisis teams, police, courts, shelters, hospitals and community based mental health services; substance abuse services for domestic violence, gun violence, and addiction; and decarceration rather than incarceration by increased use of risk assessments, jail diversion, and preventative and proactive re-entry services for residents who are at risk of incarceration or who have been incarcerated.

Family Sustainability

NASW/CT supports legislation that promotes: paid family and medical leave; increased access to emergency housing and efforts to provide long term affordable housing for all youth, individuals and families with particular emphasis on those with mental health challenges; support of Rapid Re-Housing and coordinated access networks; right to proper nutrition and food; supporting legislation that focuses on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and immigration needs amongst families in CT; increase in school based comprehensive health clinics; access to preventative mental health services in the community; access to social work services to elders in their homes and in nursing homes; home-based mental health services for all ages; holistic approaches to service provisions for older adults to remain in or return to their communities of choice; and environmental action to sustain a healthy environment. NASW CT will also focus on veteran-related challenges: such as homelessness, opioid addiction, mental health, civilian adjustment, military family support and available resources specifically for veterans.