

# CONNECTIONS

January—March 2021



*“I will work to be a president who seeks not to divide but unify...”*

*Joe Biden*

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**Shannon Perkins, LMSW**  
*President, Connecticut Chapter*

## A Reflection on 2020

Although at times it felt like this would never happen, as I sit down to write this column it is the start of a new year! 2020 has come and gone and left its mark on the world in a way that will not soon be forgotten. For many of us, this past year marked significant pain and loss. Like most others I know, I am grateful to be putting this difficult year behind me and am hopeful for the future.

As I reflect on the previous year as I do each January, I am struck by the overwhelming progress we have made in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 election cycle brought significant change to Congress, ushering in a new wave of policy makers who truly represent the American people. More women than ever before were elected to Congress. New Mexico became the first state to elect all women of color to the U.S. House of Representatives. Delaware elected our first out trans Senator in Sarah McBride and Washington State its first Korean American woman and black woman federal representative in Marilyn Strickland. Connecticut made waves, too, with the nomination of our own Commissioner of Education, Miguel Cardona, to be the next U.S. Secretary of Education and the election of U.S. Representative, Rosa DeLauro, as the next chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee. Last but certainly not least, Vice President Elect Kamala Harris has not only become the first woman Vice President but the first Black and South Asian Vice President, adding yet another crack in the glass ceiling.

In 2020, more people than ever before have spoken out against police brutality and the deep seeded institutional racism this country was founded on. This did not happen without great loss – the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey, Tony McDade, Elijah McClain, and so many others sparked outrage and action. We must continue to say their names and remember those lost in the fight to ensure black lives matter in the United States of America. In order to take steps forward in 2021, the chapter plans to collaborate with state policy makers and the CT Police Accountability and Transparency Taskforce to find ways for social workers to contribute to safe policing and law enforcement. In addition, the Board continues to work alongside the diversity committee to educate and inform membership of the role of social work in ending systemic racism.

As NASW/CT looks to expand the use of social workers in 2021, focusing on municipal settings, I want to reflect on the ways in which we shined last year. Working on the front lines in hospitals, schools, treatment centers, and even police departments, social workers have shown unwavering commitment to those in need. Over the Summer, I had the privilege of speaking with several Connecticut social workers for an interview published in our July to September newsletter – *Now What? Navigating Social Work in the Age of the Pandemic*. As noted in the article, one theme rang true throughout, humility. Often operating in

## Reflection, continued

the shadows, social work has always been a humble profession, and this clearly did not change because of COVID-19. Of the many social workers I interviewed, not even one suggested that they were on the front lines despite often being the last folks to receive proper PPE; instead, they focused on a feeling of wanting to do more, expressing concerns that there were folks they had missed. Social workers put themselves at risk for the greater good working each day as they leverage telehealth, keep their direct care staff safe, ensure their clients keep access to basic needs, and provide support to the onslaught of individuals experiencing significant grief and loss.

As we look forward to a safer, happier, and kinder year – I want to thank you once again for your continued support of the chapter. It is because of you that we can advocate for the profession, improving the lives of those we serve and ensuring adequate protections and benefits for social workers. I implore you again to further your involvement and join one of our many committees.

Not only will you be able to engage and network with colleagues from across the state, but you will also be able to help shape the path of this chapter as we enter a new year. If you want to make a difference in the way social work is seen in Connecticut, inform the chapter's policy advocacy, and make an impact in your area of expertise, what are you waiting for? Browse all chapter committees at the link below.

<http://naswct.org/about/committees-networks/>.

As we head into this new year with the knowledge that the darkest days of the pandemic lie ahead of us, we must remember the bright spots. We have experienced unwavering kindness, selflessness, and community allowing us to remain hopeful and put one foot in front of the other to move forward each day. As President Elect Joe Biden has said over and over again – there has never been anything we couldn't do, when we've done it together.

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## Are You Interested in Legislative Action?

The Chapter's Education & Legislative Action Network (ELAN) works on legislative initiatives during the CT Legislative Session. ELAN recommends the annual legislative agenda, determines what bills to support and oppose, testifies on legislation, meets with legislators and mobilizes the membership on key legislative priority bills.

ELAN is seeking members who would like to take action on legislative bills and assure that the social work profession is heard at the Capitol. Meetings are the second Thursday of each month by Zoom. If you would like more information, want to sit-in on a meeting or are ready to join, contact Stephen Wanczyk-Karp at [skarp.naswt@socialworkers.org](mailto:skarp.naswt@socialworkers.org)

## Looking Back—Looking Forward

Steve Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW  
*Executive Director  
Connecticut Chapter*



As one year comes to a close and the next begins it is somewhat traditional to look back at the year that was and look forward to the year that will be. Looking back perhaps can be described in one word, “unprecedented”. Looking forward can be described by me in one word too, “hopeful”.

As I look back at 2020, I cannot help but feel a deep sadness at the sacrifices and losses so many individuals and families incurred. More Americans died of Covid-19 in 2020 than all American soldiers killed in War World II. How many of those deaths could have been avoided we will never know. What we do know is that far too many of our elected leaders failed us by their inaction and lack of political will to embrace simple preventive measures. Covid-19 discolors 2020 in a way that makes it hard to write about the successes achieved by the profession and NASW/CT. Yet amidst the worse pandemic in over a century we did prevail in ways that deserve recognition.

Social work stepped up in 2020 to help those most impacted by the Covid-19 virus. Practitioners who had never delivered virtual services rapidly pivoted to telehealth, learning to use platforms and technology in an ethical and confidential manner. As most of the population went into isolation and in-person therapy became unsafe, social workers

stepped up to make sure mental health, health and basic needs were being met. Social workers in direct service became “essential workers” and for many this included working in facilities and in the community, at least initially without proper PPE, where we risked our own health for the betterment of others. Our work, be it in-person or virtual, largely took place outside of the public eye. We dealt with others needs, while harboring our own fears, hardships and compassion fatigue. In so many ways 2020 has been our finest hours. I thank each one of you for persevering and for continuing to demonstrate daily the critical importance of social work.

Another “virus” came upon us at the same time as Covid-19. This virus has been with us since the founding of our nation and is systemic in nature. Racism came to the open surface in police killings of African American’s. In an environment where high office holders refuse to denounce racist actions, and arguably have encouraged the racists poison, the social work profession has been challenged to look at our own roles within society racism and demanded of us to support anti-racist movements. Many social workers began overdue dialogues and took steps toward anti-racist actions, denouncing those who voice hate, and at the same time acknowledging how far we still have to go.



## Looking Forward, continued

For NASW/CT 2020 was a tumultuous year that started out with the promise of new ways to advance social work practice, only to have to pivot away from these opportunities, instead having to find new models for functioning. We started the legislative year with a half-dozen bills that gave us a chance to enhance practice, a new hotel site for the annual conference, and the beginning of a campaign to expand hiring of professional social workers at the municipal level. But then Covid-19 hit, the Legislature largely shut down with our half-dozen bills being suspended, the annual conference was postponed and municipalities had far too much on their plates to consider the value of giving preference in hiring to BSWs and MSWs. For the Chapter, finding new ways to operate and serve members became an all-encompassing task. I thank my staff for rapidly making the changes necessary to keep us up and running.

2020 did see important accomplishments in the legislative arena, electoral results and internally for NASW/CT the manner we communicated to members and provided continuing education. Legislatively, we helped pass a sweeping police accountability bill, a telehealth law and a bill allowing for safe, absentee voting. Electorally, the Chapter's volunteers and staff made over 1,500 phone calls to members on behalf of endorsed candidates, resulting in significant wins both at the state and national level. In terms of continuing education, the Chapter moved from in-person to virtual webinars to assure members still had high quality continuing education available. NASW/CT also sent out timely updates on practice and resources, sometimes emailing daily when the need demanded it. We also moved all of our committees to virtual meetings that actually allowed greater participation by members who

could not make it to in-person meetings. Within the dual crises the work goes on.

As 2020 came to an end NASW/CT is pro-actively pursuing opportunities for social workers to be utilized in a positive way by police departments, making telehealth provisions in law permanent, and making sure that nursing home social work is not forgotten as the state looks at the horror show that Covid-19 wrought upon long-term care facility residents (see articles in this newsletter). I am excited to be working on, and representing the profession in these forward-thinking initiatives.

I recently had a call from a social worker who wished me a better coming year. I responded that 2021 can only be a better year! Just the inauguration on January 20<sup>th</sup> is an act of betterment. The legislature will return in some fashion that will allow us to proceed with our advocacy to advance social justice and enhance social work practice. The vaccine promises safer communities as 2021 proceeds. The use of Zoom and other virtual platforms has taught us how to involve more members in the Chapter's work that will continue in some fashion that meets members needs. We are now well experienced in virtual continuing education that allows us to bring high quality virtual trainings for as long as necessary and will surely remain a part of our CE offerings to make our programs more accessible. 2020 changed the way we do business as a Chapter and as a profession. 2021 will see a fine tuning of these changes in ways that I hope will benefit those populations that our profession serves and the membership of NASW.

I look forward to working with all of you in 2021!

## NASW/CT 2021 Legislative Agenda

The Education for Legislative Action Network committee of the National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter (NASW/CT) sets forth its 2021 agenda aligning with the five social justice priorities established by the 2018/2019 NASW national board: voting rights, criminal justice/juvenile justice, environmental justice, immigration, and economic justice. NASW/CT pledges in 2021 to organize our membership to advocate in areas where we are uniquely impacted regarding specifics to the social work profession and larger social justice issues facing our state.

### **Proposed Legislative Goals for NASW/CT:**

#### **Advancing Racial, Economic, and Social Justice**

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes elimination of inequities and disparities relating to race, class, and ethnicity. We seek actions that promote anti-racist policies and culturally responsive practices in all aspects of community life, including but not limited to social services, health care, mental health and addiction services, education, affordable housing, employment, and equitable access to capital and justice.

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes LGBTQIA rights and women's rights, including maintaining a woman's right to birth control and all reproductive health services.

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes fighting climate change in the form of improving air and water quality via elimination of lead poisoning and reduction of pollution in low-income communities.

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes increased access to broadband technology.

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes student debt relief.

#### **Protecting Safety Net Services**

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 programs that prevent individuals from falling into poverty.

#### **Expanding Access to Comprehensive Medical and Behavioral Health Care**

NASW/CT believes that every Connecticut resident has the right and access to comprehensive health care. Specifically, we support public options for health coverage, affording prescription co-pays at all income levels, expansion of Medicaid/HUSKY eligibility to 201% of the federal poverty level, and Medicaid coverage for undocumented immigrants.

NASW/CT calls for making permanent telehealth provisions for audio only, provider rates being equal for in-person and telehealth services, utilization of any HIPAA compliant platform and Medicaid coverage.

NASW/CT calls for increased funding for community-based prevention and mental health and addiction services including a greater emphasis on children and adolescents. Specifically, we support increased funding to non-profit mental health providers and school-based health care centers and supports legislation for school social workers in every public school.

## Legislative Agenda, continued

NASW/CT calls for planning to occur immediately for the tsunami of mental health and addiction needs that has been brought on by Covid-19.

### **Policing, Justice, and Prison Reform**

NASW/CT supports legislation that specifically promotes bail reform, juvenile justice reform, elimination of solitary confinement, prison phone justice, clean slate laws, reallocating funds from incarceration to decarceration, police accountability, and programs that offer community-based crisis interventions, treatment, and alternatives to arrest and incarceration.

### **Voting and Election Reform**

NASW/CT supports encouragement of voting by all eligible residents. We support early voting, mail in voting, no excuse absentee voting and allowing parolees to vote.

### **Tax Reform**

NASW/CT supports tax reform that promotes economic justice. We support increased income taxes on the wealthy, expansion of the estate and gift tax, establishment of a surcharge on investment income and a sunset on corporate tax breaks. To advance economic justice for low-income households we support expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

### **Protecting and Strengthening the Profession**

NASW/CT supports legislation that allows social workers to practice at their highest level of scope of practice. We support a nursing-home-bed-to-social-worker ratio of 60 beds to 1 social worker; expanding professional opportunities for social workers in the public, for-profit, and nonprofit settings; Medicaid coverage for social work services in home care; and measures to assure workplace safety, inclusive of physical and emotional trauma and personal protective equipment.

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## Police and Social Work Update

As reported in the last newsletter the Legislature passed a Police Accountability Bill that included a requirement for police departments to study and report on the feasibility of utilizing social workers on police calls. NASW/CT collaborated with the CT Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) in a position paper that outlined ways that social workers can be effectively utilized on 911 calls and for officer wellness. The paper was distributed by the CPCA to all police chiefs in Connecticut, including university police departments. The paper generated conversations with the Coventry, Canton, Norwalk and Yale University police departments.

NASW/CT also submitted testimony to the Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force on social workers responding to 911 calls <http://naswct.org/testimony/testimony-on-utilization-of-social-workers-by-police-departments/> and separate testimony on officer wellness <http://naswct.org/testimony/testimony-on-utilization-of-social-workers-by-police-departments-for-officer-well-being-and-mental-health-examinations/>. The Chapter anticipates presenting to the Task Force in early 2021.

## Nursing Home Social Work Catches Attention of Oversight Work Group

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit Connecticut's nursing homes especially hard. In what can only be described as a horror show in some long-term care facilities, this pandemic brought to the public eye, in a glaring manner, the lack of preparation and insufficient care in many nursing homes. In response to the significant amounts of deaths in the homes the Lamont Administration appointed a Nursing Home and Assisted Living Oversight Work Group to make recommendations on how to improve care in the state's long-term care facilities. The Oversight Group consisted of state legislators, executive branch officials, community based organizational representatives and a family member. The Oversight Work Group had four sub-committees, one which is on staffing that the Chapter has focused on influencing.

The minimum staffing ratio for social work in nursing homes is 1 social worker to 120 beds. This ratio is in Public Health regulations that are over 30 years old. NASW/CT is calling for a new ratio of 1 social worker to 60 beds that is the maximum amounts of beds we believe can be covered sufficiently.

In written testimony presented to the Oversight Work Group NASW/CT said "Prior to Covid-19 nursing home social workers faced multiple tasks and responsibilities including but nowhere near limited to: prompt referral for patients and families in financial need, helping each patient to adjust to the social and emotional needs related to nursing home placement, family meetings, care plan meetings, staff meetings, developing plans of care for the social and emotional needs of the resident, counseling residents and family members, discharge planning, coordinating care with outside services, assisting with Money Follows the Person, dealing with issues of conservatorship, protecting resident rights, assessing cognitive and mental functioning, dealing with resident to resident altercations, providing emotional support for residents coping with loss of independence and function, and staff training on resident rights. Then add an increasingly extensive amount of paperwork that includes: assessments; care plans; Mini Mental Status Exams; MDS (Minimum Data Set) done upon admission, quarterly, annually and when a change in

condition occur, Medicaid clinical evaluations, plus medical record charting of any changes with the resident. All of this and more is required of the social worker at a ratio of 1 full-time social worker (forty hours) to 120 residents. **The current ratio is absurd, outdated, undoable, and downright insane, and is a major factor in why qualified social workers burn out and leave the field of nursing home social work."** NASW/CT emphasized that since the start of Covid-19 this workload has dramatically increased, especially family work where the nursing home social worker is the main connection between the resident and their loved ones. To read the full testimony go to <http://naswct.org/testimony/comments-and-recommendations-on-nursing-home-social-work/>

The Chapter lobbied members of the Work Group in one-on-one virtual meetings where we pressed the importance of social work services to assure that social work is not forgotten by the Staffing Sub-committee. In addition, Shazia Chaudhry, LCSW presented to the Sub-Committee on the many roles and functions performed by nursing home social workers. State Representative Michelle Cook, Staffing Sub-committee Co-Chair called Shazia's presentation "Incredibly helpful".

As of this writing the Oversight Work Group has completed their work and recommended that there be an increase in social workers in nursing homes in accordance with best practices. This recommendation has been introduced by Representative Michelle Cook as bill *5718: An Act Concerning Nursing Home Facility Staffing* that is in the Public Health Committee. NASW/CT is working to get the bill raised for public hearing. The bill addresses nursing, nursing aides, social workers and recreation staff. It does not have a specific ratio for social workers, which concerns us, so NASW/CT will lobby for stronger language that is easily enforceable.

NASW/CT has periodically attempted to have the social worker to bed ratio reduced. We have twice introduced legislation, conducted a survey of nursing home social workers in 2010 that found that 72% of all respondents listed lack of time to perform their job effectively as their number one concern, and



## Oversight, continued

commissioned a time study that found that under the 1/120 ratio that the social worker had only 11 minutes per week per resident. While we recognize that not all homes operate at the bare minimum ratio it is clear to us that the vast majority of nursing homes are understaffed for social work.

NASW/CT believes that the Oversight Work Group has been the best opportunity we have ever had to bring to light the importance of nursing home social work services and to make progress in enhancing social work services in long-term care facilities. Watch for alerts from the Chapter as we work to move this issue forward in the 2021 legislative session.

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## NASW/CT Pushes Forward on Telehealth Law

In July 2020 the CT Legislature passed a temporary law that extended Governor Lamont's executive order on coverage for telehealth. The law, which is set to expire on March 15, 2021, allows for audio only, equal payment for in-person and telehealth sessions, utilization of any HIPPA compliant platform and provides for Medicaid coverage of telehealth. All of these provisions will expire on March 15, 2021 if not extended by the Legislature or by action of the Governor. The Telehealth Act was originally drafted to continue until June 30, 2021 however the insurance industry successfully got legislative and administrative leaders to move up the expiration date to March 15<sup>th</sup>. NASW/CT had called for the law to be made permanent.

Fast forward to December 2020 and going forward the Chapter is reaching out to other mental health professions and advocates in the hope of a coordinated campaign to have action taken prior to March 15<sup>th</sup> to make the telehealth law permanent. We expect that social workers will be amongst the loudest voices at the Legislature, sharing with legislators the importance to consumers of having full telehealth services covered.

We know from our experience that telehealth has greatly expanded the ability of CT's residents to acquire health care. It has particularly helped older adults, persons with disabilities, residents with limited transportation options and lower income workers who would otherwise not have been able

to receive in-person care. Especially in this pandemic, when much of the population has been encouraged to remain home, telehealth has allowed for safe access to health care.

NASW/CT's initial member lobbying has been directed to Senate Democrats prior to their first caucus, co-chairs of the Insurance Committee and the top legislative leadership. Starting in the first week of January we will be asking all members to contact their legislators to demand quick action. Constituent contacts are the most effective means for influencing elected officials and NASW/CT excels in mobilization of our members.

Your lobbying is paying off! As of the end of January there are numerous bills introduced on telehealth and the Senate Democrats list it as a major priority. Now we just need to keep up the pressure.

At the national level the latest Covid-19 relief bill makes permanent the Medicare telehealth provisions adopted by CMS due to the pandemic.

If you have not yet contacted your state representative and state senator please do so now. Not sure who represents you? Go here for full contact information <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp> The insurance industry beat us in the summer of 2020. We must not let them do it again in the winter of 2021.

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## Call for Election Nominations

*Have you thought about taking on a leadership role in your chapter?*

Or perhaps you know someone who would make a  
terrific chapter leader?

*If so, now is the time to let us know!*

Being an elected leader on the Board of Directors of the NASW/CT Chapter provides you with the opportunity to have a direct say in the chapter's programs, policies, use of resources, and future directions. It's also a terrific way to meet colleagues from throughout the state and to gain a feel for the pulse of social work practice in Connecticut. You will be providing the Association with your expertise and in turn making networking connections that will help in your own career advancement. Truly it is a win, win situation that's enjoyable too!

In developing the ballot, the chapter seeks to successfully meet the chapter's diversity plan, geographic representation, and representation from diverse fields of practice. All nominees are given full consideration and while we may not be able to offer all nominees a place on the ballot these individuals are often considered for other leadership appointments within the Chapter.

NASW/CT is seeking members to serve on the Board of Directors as **president-elect, first vice president, BSW & MSW student representative, At-Large Member (2 positions), and Region 3 Representative (Southwest and Western CT)**. Terms of office for the Board are for three years, except for students who serve one year.

If you are interested in being nominated for a chapter leadership position, would like to know more about available elected opportunities or would like to recommend a colleague please contact Steve Wanczyk-Karp at the Chapter Office – 860-212-4054 or [skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org](mailto:skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org)

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## 6 Social Work Legislators—6 Leadership Appointments

We are proud to announce that the 2021/22 Legislature will have six social work legislators and each one of them has been appointed to a committee leadership position. Here are the social work legislators and their committee leadership appointments:

**Senator Steve Cassano** is Senate Chair of the Planning and Development Committee and Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee.

**Senator Rick Lopes** is Senate Chair of the Housing Committee and Vice Chair of the Aging Committee.

**Representative Toni Walker** is House Chair of the Appropriations Committee.

**Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey** is House Chair of the Planning and Development Committee.

**Representative Jillian Gilchrest** is House Vice Chair of the Public Health Committee.

**Representative Anne Hughes** is House Vice Chair of the Aging Committee.

Each committee has a Senate and House chair and vice chair. Committee chairs control the committee's agenda in consultation with the vice chairs. Most of these committees typically address legislation that NASW/CT works on. It speaks volumes that we have six social work legislators and each one of them is in a leadership position.

## Recorded Trainings Now Available

### SOCIAL WORK ONLINE CE INSTITUTE

Some of the trainings we have been doing via Zoom were recorded and are now available on the **CE Institute**. These would count towards the 6 CECs you can have via web based (pre-recorded) media and because they are approved by NASW/CT, they are accepted in Connecticut. Thanks again to the presenters who helped make this possible!

["Mindfulness for Social Workers" by Dana Schneider, PhD, LCSW, ACC, CMT-P, RYT 200](#)

["Zooming into Mindfulness; Telehealth with Children" by Rose-Ann Wanczyk-Karp, LCSW, BCD, DCSW, ACSW](#)

["Screening, Assessment, Support, and Intervention for Victims & Survivors of Domestic Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic" with Kai Belton, LCSW, Linda Blozie, and Sharlene Kerelejza, LMSW](#)



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## Resources for Social Workers Helping LGBTQ Youth

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Diversity Committee sponsored “Queer Black Lives Matter: The Intersection of Race, Gender and Sexuality in K-12 Schools.” This webinar was presented by Alberto Cifuentes, Jr, LMSW, a member of the committee. Those who attended appreciated the opportunity to gain an understanding of challenges facing LGBTQ youth of color (and LGBTQ youth in general). The webinar included specific action steps social workers can take to improve the welfare of LGBTQ youth in schools. For example, in a recent GLSEN survey, students reported that staff members’ responses to bullying and harassment were more likely to be effective when:

- Staff took disciplinary action against the perpetrator.
- Staff educated the perpetrator about bullying.
- Staff contacted the perpetrator’s parents.
- Staff filed a report.



Alberto also shared a number of resources. Most are from GLSEN, a national organization that works to ensure that LGBTQ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. Feel free to go to [glsen.org](https://www.glsen.org) to explore what’s there, or try some of the specific links below:

Regarding LGBTQ youth of color:

<https://www.glsen.org/lgbtq-youth-color>

Regarding LGBTQ elementary level youth:

<https://www.glsen.org/activity/ready-set-respect-elementary-toolkit>

Regarding LGBTQ middle and high school youth:

<https://www.glsen.org/activity/glsen-safe-space-kit-solidarity-lgbtq-youth>

NEA recommendations regarding LGBTQ youth of color:

<https://neadjustice.org/2020/10/23/what-our-students-need-now-virtual-school-culture-that-is-healthy-just-and-strong/>

And you can find out more about getting involved with the CT chapter of GLSEN at:

<https://www.glsen.org/chapter/connecticut>



## The NASW/CT 2021 Advocacy Fund Drive

### *Help Us Protect & Expand Social Services & Expand Social Justice Laws*

#### *Our Legislative Agenda Includes:*

##### **Social Justice Issues**

Protecting the Safety Net for Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens;  
Making Telehealth changes **PERMANENT**;  
Expanding HUSKY to cover parents up to 210% poverty rate;  
Creating a Public Option in health insurance;  
Increasing funding for community non-profit providers;  
Expansion of mental health services in schools and community;  
Criminal justice reforms;  
Promoting progressive revenue sources to pay for human services.

##### **Social Work Legislation**

Increasing number of social workers in nursing homes;  
Medicaid coverage for social work services in home care;  
Increase the number of CEU hours allowed as home study;  
**Defeating any bills that infringe on social work practice;**

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## Reflections from a Grateful Social Worker

"We've braved the belly of the beast, We've learned that quiet isn't always peace, and the norms and notions of what just is isn't always just-ice."

Amanda Gorman's inauguration day poem "The Hill We Climb" made me think of the day when my parents hurriedly ushered me and my sisters to the basement. It was a summer day in 1967 and race riots erupted in Newark, NJ, thirteen miles from my childhood home. Prompted by the beating of a black cab driver by two white police officers, injustice was center stage that day. Injustice and fear.

White abuse of power and maintaining control were also on full display in Newark that day, and my parents' fear of the unknown and how these events could affect us. I also recalled the day my mother said: "Come inside," when brown skinned people were walking down our street as I sat on the front steps as a young child. Fear and her ignorance about others who did not look like us prompted an otherwise kind and loving woman to doubt my safety.

In college, when my black sociology professor was asked why people drive fancy cars and then return to their disenfranchised neighborhoods that clearly show their social status, his response was clear: that all persons want the same things in life; to be respected, to belong, and to be treated equally and justly, no matter their differences.

And as I listened to the intrepid poet laureate recite her entire poem, I kept reflecting on her notion of justice as I realized that as a social worker, I was called to heed her words throughout my career. This idea that we go on our merry ways and assume that all is well with the world when it clearly isn't, helped me to consider the profession I

have chosen to be my life's work and why it is critical for our current times more than ever.

There have been countless recent injustices beyond what the US and the world would believe with the recent murders of innocent black people : George Floyd on the street in MN, Elijah McClain as he walked in CO, the tormenting and murder of Ahmaud Arbery in GA, and the gunning down of Breonna Taylor as she slept in her bed in KY, to name a few. These senseless deaths of black persons once again thrust horrific injustice into our collective consciousness. A testimony to what Gorman was referring to in her poem.

As a proud social worker for over thirty four years and having witnessed racism, though not experienced it personally, I know that the fear of losing power over others is at the crux of the social problem. Our society has a long and arduous past about subjugation and white power that largely remains absent in our history books, and even now, schools struggle to uncover. The US educational system has done its best to keep it hidden so that confronting it is not needed, until it is.

This past summer proved this as protesters of racial injustice from sea to sea declared that this was enough and the time of reckoning was at hand. And so with the inauguration of the forty sixth US President and Vice President, a new era of understanding, connection, and community is again possible. We stand at a precipice to confront the injustices of this land in new and bold ways, and our social work profession is at the heart of this. Education overcomes fear and thus it is our mission as social workers to work towards the enlightenment that will create a more just society.

## Reflections, continued

When Jane Addams founded Hull House in Chicago in 1889, she recognized the need to educate people to enhance their lives so they could lift themselves out of poverty and become productive and fulfilled citizens. She was the first social worker and she sparked the onset of the social work profession, and its myriad of organizations, agencies, and programs designed to meet the challenges of inequality and injustice. As social workers, we must continually confront social justice and think and act in new and bold ways as we embark on the next four years of a new administration that promises to strive for unity and thus understanding, connection, and community.

These threads of alienation and subjugation have been carried forth for generations and while some progress has been made, our country clearly has much work to do to begin to heal. Fear and racism break down the sense of connection and without this, a sense of community as well.

We are in the midst of grave times of reckoning with inequality as it is being revealed in the form of the pandemic, national protests, and racial division and fight for power and control within our government. Our profession heeds the call of unity by the work we do every day: confronting the economic hardships of people, health disparities in care, and emotional and mental challenges. We foster connection by implementing policy changes, advocating for basic rights, and developing services to bring justice into the lives of those who for far too long have been denied this right.

As social workers, our role is one of guiding those who have never felt a sense of community to a path of belonging, hope, and connection. May we always remain up for this challenge.

**Kathleen Grib Novak, LCSW**  
**January 20, 2021**

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**Wondering how to get 6 Continuing Ed Online Credits that you know will meet Connecticut's licensing requirements?**

Go to the **CE Institute** on the NASW/CT website at [www.naswct.org](http://www.naswct.org), then click on Continuing Education/CE Institute. There are dozens of classes on dozens of topics at reasonable prices!



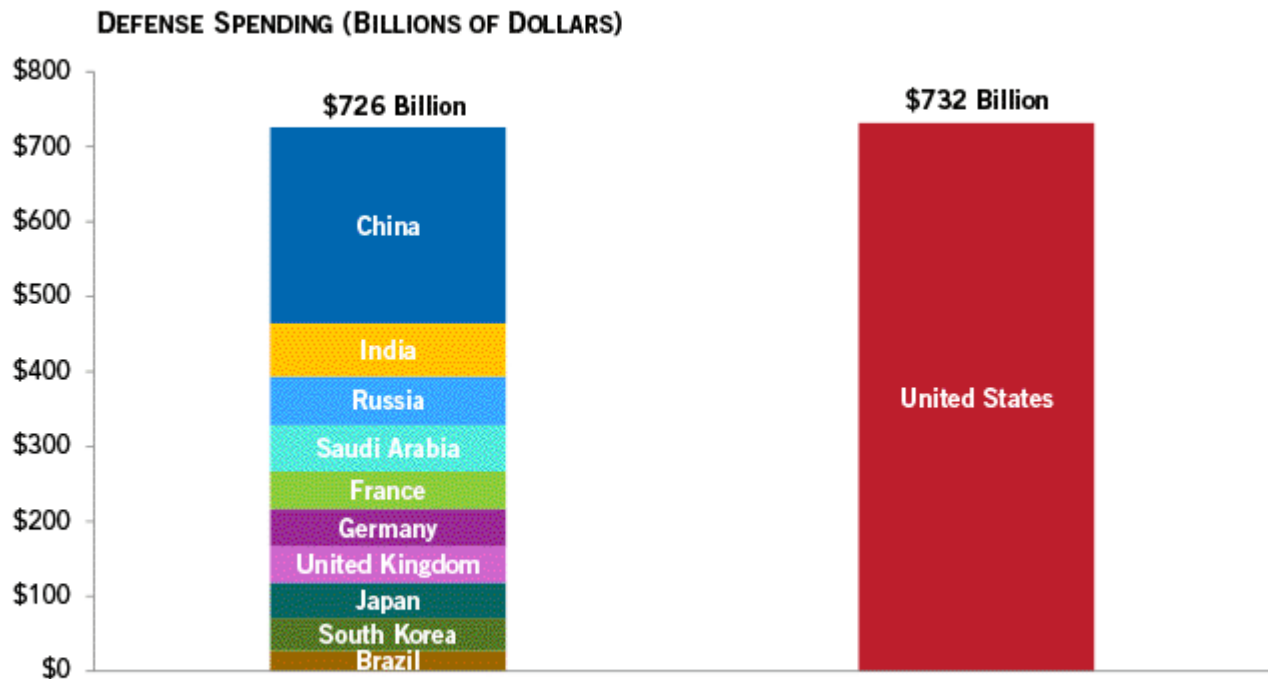
## A different look at the defense budget

Reprinted with the permission of the CT Mirror

The Mirror recently reported that Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Rep. Joe Courtney are fighting hard against Trump's "feckless threat to veto the National Defense Authorization Act." Go, team! According to our representatives, even the threat of a veto goes squarely against bipartisan passage of the defense bill, which is apparently "the longest running traditions in Congress" — going back to the time of President Kennedy.



### The United States spends more on defense than the next 10 countries combined



SOURCE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*, April 2020.

NOTES: Figures are in U.S. dollars converted from local currencies using market exchange rates. Data for the United States are for fiscal year 2019, which ran from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. Data for the other countries are for calendar year 2019. The source for this chart uses a definition of defense spending that is more broad than budget function 050 and defense discretionary spending.

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[PGPF.ORG](http://PGPF.ORG)

Blumenthal and Courtney should be heartily congratulated for bringing the big bucks back to our state's many defense contractors — on whom we depend more and more each year.

But while Connecticut deserves its share of the pie, I would like to ask — with some fear and trembling — if the pie is getting too big. How many of our tax dollars are going down this hole; and why?

The U.S. budgets about \$740 billion for defense. For this year alone. That, according to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, is more than China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, and Brazil spend — combined.



## Defense, continued

It's about a round \$100 billion more than is spent on Medicare, which is essential for some 44 million Americans. And it's about ten times the \$79 billion the federal government spends on primary and secondary education programs. And every year the defense numbers and projects [proliferate](#). It is 15 percent of all federal spending and roughly half of our discretionary spending.

Do you remember "Good Ol Ike," the former general, who warned us when he retired from the presidency about the "military industrial complex?" He told us to watch out because that complex had an insidious and yet insatiable appetite for expenditures and overseas adventures. That was about 60 years ago and look what happened since.

Isn't it reasonable to think that deep down there are some sensible people in Russia, China, Israel and the oil states who would like to use some of their billions for the benefit of their fellow citizens instead of this endless slog of catch-up with us?

Just imagine what good could be done if just half our yearly \$740 billion was spent on health, education, infrastructure and innovation. And what if that caught on in the rest of the world? Is it beyond the realm of possibility that some of our defense contractors could even move toward the civilian market, that, for example, Electric Boat could spawn Electric Train?

How did we end up in this mess? Perhaps by skipping precise, long-term thinking in order to mindlessly perpetuate "the longest long-term tradition in Congress." Perhaps by avoiding the pointedly, painfully human understanding of the damage and suffering caused by our defense dollars. By mildly caring about the importance of "a strong defense" without accepting the responsibility for its consequences.

*James Robertson is an ordained UCC minister and a partner in the law firm Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey.*

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## March is Social Work Month!



March of 2021 is Social Work Month and the theme this year is “Social Workers are essential”—essential to community well-being.

For more than 120 years, the social work profession in the United States has helped bend the arc of justice, making our nation a more equitable and inclusive place.

There are more than 700,000 professional social workers employed in the U.S. and more than 3 million worldwide. Social work is one of the fastest growing professions in the United States and government sources report there are more clinically trained social workers providing mental health and behavioral health services than any other professional discipline in the nation.

Social workers are more critical than ever as the country deals with systemic racism, the Coronavirus pandemic, political divisiveness, and a serious economic downturn. We celebrate all our social workers—in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers, nonprofits, the military, government settings, and private practices.

*Celebrate with us this March as we offer workshops and forums where you can earn Continuing Education Credits, network with your colleagues via Zoom, and be a part of a profession that has made and continues to make invaluable contributions to society. Stay tuned for EBLASTS announcing upcoming events!*

## Member in the News

**Diana Masulli, LCSW** has been appointed by NASW/CT to represent the Chapter on the Department of Public Health’s Maternal Mortality Review Board, and to assure a social work perspective available to the Board. The Committee is responsible for conducting comprehensive, multidisciplinary reviews of maternal death in order to identify factors associated with maternal death and make recommendations to reduce maternal deaths.

If you have information you would like to share about yourself or NASW colleagues send them to [info.naswct@socialworkers.org](mailto:info.naswct@socialworkers.org)

## Upcoming Webinar

### Brave Conversations: Understanding Racism and Skin Color Bias

February 26, 2021

ZOOM Webinar

9:30 to 12:30

“If not now, when?” – Hillel the Elder

Do you have the courage to face the truth about American history? NASW/CT invites you to attend this highly-informative training providing participants with the knowledge, language, and tools to boldly face issues of race, racism, and skin color privilege. In a respectful environment, we will expose the socially-constructed meanings of skin color and race, and their role in upholding racism in the United States. Our work together will explore the ways systemic and personal racism affects us, our clients and the client-practitioner relationship, with practical solutions regarding how to address race, racial differences and racism in our work. Finally and most importantly, we will discuss solutions that empower us to debunk and dismantle structural and individual racism within our agencies and within ourselves.

\*Trainer’s note: the trainer is a white-European woman who cannot and does not speak for people of color. In order for structural racism to end, white-Europeans must be actively engaged in its dismantling.

This webinar will be presented by **Mara Gottlieb, PhD, LMSW**, President of Talking Changes, LLC. Dr. Gottlieb is a graduate of NYU Silver School of Social Work with both her Masters and PhD in Social Work. She is a dynamic and authentic speaker and presents frequently for The Connecticut Women’s as well as for private agencies across the state. Mara has also been a well-received presenter at several NASW/CT Conferences.

#### **Approved for 3 Cultural Competency CECs**

Free to BSW and MSW Student Members of NASW/CT

\$15 Non Member Students

\$45 NASW/CT Members

\$75 Yet to be Members

[Click HERE to Register](#)

Upon registration, you will be sent a link to the Webinar.

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## Chapter News

### **UPDATE!**

#### **Annual Conference Postponed until April 1, 2022**

With disappointment we announce that the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference has been postponed once again and will now take place on April 1st of 2022. While consideration was given to a Virtual Conference our research showed that the cost would be prohibitive and the response unpredictable. Our solution was to offer webinars during the summer and fall months. They have been well received and well attended and these virtual webinars will continue throughout the upcoming winter months and into the summer.

Our NEW venue, The Mystic Marriott, was able to reserve this April date for us and so, with hopefulness, we are looking ahead to a fabulous conference in 2022. Mark your calendars NOW and keep your fingers crossed!



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### **UPDATE!**

#### **Annual Awards Dinner, 2020 and 2021 and now 2022**

As with so many special events, COVID has interrupted our Annual Awards Dinner tradition. We had previously called for nominations for a November 2020– and then an April 2021– event at the Inn at Middletown but are now postponing until sometime in 2022.

In the interim, the Board of Directors and the Annual Awards Dinner Committee have proposed that we call for nominations for those social workers who made a positive impact practicing under COVID. Up to 3 social workers will be selected, recognized through the website and media, and then honored in person as part of the 2022 Annual Awards Dinner.

There are many social workers out there, working on the front lines, who have gone above and beyond in remarkable ways during this pandemic. Let us recognize some of them. Send us your nominations!

Scroll down for the Call for Nominations with full instructions on submitting your nominee.



# **Call For Social Worker Nominations**

## **NASW/CT 2021 AWARD for EXCELLENCE DURING COVID**

*This year the Connecticut Chapter of NASW will honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the social work profession while working during the COVID 19 pandemic. Anyone who appreciates a Social Worker is eligible to make a nomination. NASW/CT's Award Committee will recognize up to three social workers who have had a positive impact on individuals and their community while practicing under the COVID restrictions and health insecurities. This award gives the Chapter an opportunity to show appreciation to members of the profession who have gone above and beyond in remarkable ways to exemplify the commitment, spirit, advocacy, and integrity of a social worker during a pandemic that is unprecedented in our lifetime.*

### **Criteria For Award**

#### **All nominees must:**

- Be a member of NASW/CT in good standing. NASW/CT Board Members are not eligible for consideration
- Have made a recent outstanding and remarkable contribution to individuals and/or their community during COVID
- Contribute to the positive image of the social work profession
- Demonstrate a willingness to take risks for improved social work services
- Represent the professional ethics of social workers

#### **To Submit Nominations**

**Send to: NASW/CT, 2139 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 205, Rocky Hill, CT 06067**  
**or email to [phartman.naswct@socialworkers.org](mailto:phartman.naswct@socialworkers.org)**

**ALL NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED by 6/1/21**

#### **Nominations should include:**

- A statement explaining why you are nominating the individual for this award that includes a clear and specific description of the nominee's outstanding contributions during the Covid 19 pandemic
- Supporting documentation (i.e. letters of support from colleagues, newspaper clippings, etc.)
- The **CANDIDATE's** name, place of employment, address, phone, and CV
- **YOUR** name, address, and phone number

## Upcoming SWES Exam Prep Courses Now Online Via Zoom!

Due to circumstances around COVID-19, and the closure of venues, SWES has migrated its upcoming exam prep classes to Zoom! Please see the attached flyer for details. Register in advance to receive your Comprehensive Study Guide, included with registration, by mail. [www.swes.net](http://www.swes.net) or by calling 800-933-8802.



### 2021 LICENSE EXAM PREP COURSE SCHEDULE ALL COURSES ONLINE VIA ZOOM!

- February 6 - 7 — Two-day Course
- March 20 — One-day Intensive
- May 1 - 2 — Two-day Course
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- October 16 — One-day Intensive
- November 13 - 14 — Two-day Course

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**Courses have been approved** for CEC Hours (9/two-day, 5/one-day) by the NASW/CT and meet the continuing education criteria for Connecticut Social Work Licensure renewal.



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- Springfield College,  
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**"Very beneficial and interactive..."**

## Reminders: On Our Website

### Seeking Online Education for LCSW Renewal?

Visit the NASW/CT website [www.naswct.org](http://www.naswct.org) and click on the CE INSTITUTE. Here you will find a wide range of online classes and webinars all with continuing education credits. Remember CT LCSW renew allows up to 6 hours of home study including online education. Live webinars count the same as in-person programs.

No matter what practice field you are seeking education on you will find it at the NASW CE INSTITUTE @ <http://naswwa.inreachce.com/>

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### Seeking LCSW Supervision?

If you are a LMSW seeking supervision for LCSW eligibility check out the **NASW/CT Supervisors Registry**. Here you will find supervisors that have met the criteria of NASW/CT to offer supervision. Under state law any LCSW can offer clinical LCSW supervision. NASW/CT has a higher standard that we apply to the LCSWs on the **Supervisor's Registry**. Go to <http://naswct.org/supervisors-registry/> to see the full list of available supervisors.

Are you an LCSW seeking to offer supervision? Consider being on the **Supervisors Registry**. For details on qualifications, cost and an online application go to <http://naswct.org/add-new-supervisor-listing/>

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### Advertising Your Classified Ad on the Web

***NASW/CT ACCEPTS EMPLOYMENT AND CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING ON OUR WEB PAGE***

**IT'S OUR 30 – 30 - 30 PROGRAM**

**30 WORDS FOR 30 DAYS AT \$30.00**

Web Advertising Is EFFECTIVE AND INEXPENSIVE! We'll post your ad of up to 30 words for 30 days for only \$30.00. For larger ads, there is a range. Ads 31 to 50 words are \$50.00, 51 to 75 words are \$75.00 and so on, but that's not necessary; there is a field to link to an online employment listing, whether on your website, or elsewhere. Submit your ad with payment to NASW/CT. For more information or to discuss this service contact us at 860/257-8066. To submit an ad go to <http://naswct.org/place-classified-ad/>

Value added feature for advertisers. We will forward your ad to our members who have signed up for our Job Seekers list at no additional cost to you.

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## Contact Information

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Rocky Hill, CT 06067

(860) 257-8066  
Fax: (860) 257-8074

[naswct.naswct@socialworkers.org](mailto:naswct.naswct@socialworkers.org)  
[www.naswct.org](http://www.naswct.org)

Change Membership Data  
National Office, DC  
\*Members can make changes online

800-742-4089\*  
[www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)

NASW Assurance Services

855-385-2160

LCSW Exam Application—Department of Health

800-509-7603

Ethical Questions  
Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, NASW/CT Executive Director

860-257-8066 x202  
[skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org](mailto:skarp.naswct@socialworkers.org)

Committee Participation  
NASW/CT Chapter Staff

860-257-8066

Licensing Questions  
NASW/CT Chapter Staff

860-257-8066

Continuing Education Information/Conference Questions  
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Website, Newsletter, Advertising & Labels  
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