Federal Successes:

Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act

- The Action Network for Social Work Education and Research (ANSWER Coalition) helped to draft the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act (SWRA) which was introduced in the 110th and 111th Congress by Representative Edolphus Towns and Senator Barbara Mikulski.


- On February 27, 2008, an event was held in the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill recognizing the introduction of SWRA in the 110th Congress; Rep. Towns, Rep. Shays, and Dr. Height were the featured speakers.

- The House of Representatives held the first ever Congressional hearing on the profession, “Caring for the Vulnerable: The State of Social Work in America.”

- Numerous grassroots documents were created to inform social workers and other stakeholders about SWRA including a fact sheet, biography sheets on Dr. Height and Whitney Young, action postcards, and a petition.

- NASW National Communications Network worked with the Entertainment Industries Council on social work image in media and entertainment.

- The ANSWER Coalition, along with NASW, BPD, and the Clinical Social Work Association, created videos in support of SWRA.

- Over 100,000 pieces of grassroots communication were sent to Capitol Hill in support of SWRA.

- Dr. Height personally contacted Members of Congress and the Executive Branch in support of SWRA.

- CSWE kicked off its Public Policy initiative in 2008 to advance its policy goals and enhance policies influencing social work education.
NADD meetings and listservs addressed opportunities for effective legislation action. Various schools of social work included Social Work Reinvestment information in their newsletters or alumni updates.

Students focused on social work reinvestment during the virtual 2010 Student Social Work Congress.


SWRA was included as a “bill to watch” in the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) report “Opportunities for All Pathways Out of Poverty.”

Congressman Towns spoke about SWRA at the Carl A. Scott Memorial Lecture at the 2009 Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education.

Members of Congress worked to include the Social Work Reinvestment Commission in the President’s economic stimulus package.

Several Members of Congress supported appropriations report language in FY2009 and FY2010 which included the Social Work Reinvestment Commission and social work research.

Congressman Towns wrote a letter to Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius urging her to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission.

The social work members of Congress spoke about how their education, training, and experience as social workers assisted their work in Congress at the 2010 Social Work Congress.

SWRA is being featured in the social work policy textbook, “Social Workers: Using Legislation for Creating Change.”

Members of the ANSWER Coalition met with key Members of Congress and staff regarding SWRA throughout the 110th and 111th Congress, letters were sent to each Senator and Representative encouraging their support of SWRA.

Congressman Towns proposed that the Social Work Reinvestment Commission be included as an amendment to Senate “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.” These include:

- Sec. 3508. Demonstration program to integrate quality improvement and patient safety training into clinical education of health professionals.
- Sec. 5101. National health care workforce commission.
- Sec. 5102. State health care workforce development grants.
- Sec. 5203. Health and behavioral health workforce loan repayment programs.
- Sec. 5301. Geriatric education and training, career awards, comprehensive geriatric education.
- Sec. 5306. Mental and behavioral health education and training grants.

NASW sent a letter to President Obama urging him to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission in the Department of Health and Human Services.

All 56 NASW Chapters worked in support of SWRA, contacting and visiting their Members of Congress in-district.

Members of Congress wrote a letter to President Obama encouraging him to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission via Executive Order in August 2010.

NASW and BPD collaborated on social work curriculum to accompany the documentary film “Finding Uncle Whitney: The Search for Leadership in America” based on the leadership skills of Whitney Young. Presentations were given at BPD and CSWE conferences.

NASW worked with numerous schools of social work and policy classes to focus projects on SWRA.

Social Work Month is continually recognized in the Congressional Record by the social work Members of Congress.

SWRA was placed on the House suspension calendar in June 2010.
The U.S. House of Representatives established a Social Work Caucus in the 111th Congress.

Congressman Towns recognized the 50th Anniversary of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW) in the Congressional Record in 2010.

NASW presented Dr. Height with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2010 Social Work Congress, shortly after her death.

Political Action & the Executive Branch

- NASW worked closely with the Obama Administration and the Coalition for Women’s Appointments to nominate women social workers to the Executive Branch; Successful nominations included Kathy Greenlee (Assistant Secretary for Aging, Administration on Aging), Carmen Nazario (Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families), Ann Widger (White House Office of Public Liaison).
- Members of the ANSWER Coalition met with representatives from the Executive Branch including several Department of Health and Human Service entities (Administration for Children and Families, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Indian Health Service, National Institutes of Health, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and the Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Labor, and Department of Veterans Affairs.
- The 2010 Student Policy Practice Forum held in Washington DC included Congressman Towns and ANSWER Coalition staff who spoke about SWRA.

Additional Federal Legislation

- The Child Welfare Workforce Improvement Act (S. 2837) was introduced by Senator Lincoln. It would create a national commission to study child welfare workforce issues, take steps to remove barriers to training in IV-B and IV-E, promote regulations to create data about the child welfare workforce and create a demonstration a child welfare workforce demonstration grant program.
- The Clinical Social Work Medicare Equity Act (S. 687) would amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit direct payment under the Medicare program for clinical social worker services provided to residents of skilled nursing facilities.
- The College Cost Reduction Act was enacted and will forgive 100% of the remaining educational debt balance after 120 monthly payments have been made. Social workers have to work in public service during the 120 payments and at the time of the loan cancellation.
- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Pub. L. 110-351) expands IV-E funds to provide short term training for current or prospective relative guardians; private state-licensed or state-approved child welfare agencies providing services to children receiving IV-E assistance and judges, attorneys, guardian ad litem and other court-appointed special advocates.
- The Higher Education Reauthorization and Opportunity Act was signed into law and provides loan forgiveness up to $2,000 per year for five years for a maximum of $10,000 to child welfare workers who have a degree in social work or a related field with a focus on serving children and families and who are employed full time in public or private child welfare settings, as well as mental health professionals with a Master’s degree in social work who serve children, adolescents or veterans.
- The Increased Student Achievement Through Increased Student Support Act (S. 538/HR 1361) would direct the Secretary of Education to award competitive, renewable, five-year grants to partnerships between low-income local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools offering graduate programs in school counseling, social work, or psychology to increase the number of program graduates employed by low-income LEAs.
- NASW launched the loan forgiveness information page: SocialWorkers.org/loanforgiveness/default.asp
- The National Center for Social Work Research Act (S. 114) has been reintroduced with support from Congress and the social work community. It would amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the...
National Center for Social Work Research as an agency of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct, support, and disseminate targeted research on social work methods and outcomes related to problems of significant social concern. It continually brings awareness to the need for additional social work research to solve pressing challenges within our nation’s most vulnerable communities.

- The Strengthen Social Work Training Act (S1403) would amend title VII of the Public Health Service Act to ensure that social work students or social work schools are eligible for support under certain programs that would assist individuals in pursuing health careers or for grants for training projects in geriatrics, and to establish a social work training program.
- The Teri Zenner Social Worker Safety Act (HR 1490), which was named after the slain social worker in Kansas, received bipartisan support and widespread recognition. It would establish a grant program to assist in the provision of safety measures to protect social workers and other professionals who work with at-risk populations.

State Successes
- Presentations on the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative were given at meetings of the Council on Social Work Education, the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work, and in the following states: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Dakota, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Washington, DC. A lunchtime teleconference was also held on the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative.
- All NASW Chapters worked on state-level social work reinvestment legislation and policy focusing on workforce challenges.
- Arizona utilized new social media tools to educate the public about social work.
- Arkansas created a Public Education campaign video.
- The California Chapter successfully sponsored legislation to allow California social workers to take the National Exam for licensure, which allows California social workers to be eligible for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment program.
- Connecticut passed a new level of licensure for MSW graduates and over-ride a governor’s veto of the bill.
- Florida achieved title protection.
- Illinois testified at one of the Governor’s Health Reform Implementation Councils regarding increased access to health care, reducing treatment disparities, controlling costs, and improving the affordability, quality, and effectiveness of health care.
- Indiana gained title protection for social workers.
- Kansas passed social worker safety legislation.
- Louisiana has invested in improving the image of social workers with 6 billboards and news and ads in health care publication.
- Massachusetts created a Public Education campaign video.
- New Mexico prevented a change in social work supervision requirements for social workers at state hospitals.
- New York doubled loan forgiveness from $1 million to $2 million.
- The Ohio Chapter convened a statewide Workplace Safety Taskforce to advocate for safe environments for all social workers.
- Oregon conducted state workforce study and held social work reinvestment summit with stakeholders across the state. They also worked to draft a joint memorial in their state legislature to urge the U.S. Congress to pass SWRA.
- Pennsylvania established title protection and placed numerous public education campaign ads on billboards, buses and other public venues.
- Rhode Island has utilized extensive and multiple contacts with students, employers, and legislators to forward the goals of SWRI.

Arizona utilized new social media tools to educate the public about social work.
Arkansas created a Public Education campaign video.
The California Chapter successfully sponsored legislation to allow California social workers to take the National Exam for licensure, which allows California social workers to be eligible for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment program.
Connecticut passed a new level of licensure for MSW graduates and over-ride a governor’s veto of the bill.
Florida achieved title protection.
Illinois testified at one of the Governor’s Health Reform Implementation Councils regarding increased access to health care, reducing treatment disparities, controlling costs, and improving the affordability, quality, and effectiveness of health care.
Indiana gained title protection for social workers.
Kansas passed social worker safety legislation.
Louisiana has invested in improving the image of social workers with 6 billboards and news and ads in health care publication.
Massachusetts created a Public Education campaign video.
New Mexico prevented a change in social work supervision requirements for social workers at state hospitals.
New York doubled loan forgiveness from $1 million to $2 million.
The Ohio Chapter convened a statewide Workplace Safety Taskforce to advocate for safe environments for all social workers.
Oregon conducted state workforce study and held social work reinvestment summit with stakeholders across the state. They also worked to draft a joint memorial in their state legislature to urge the U.S. Congress to pass SWRA.
Pennsylvania established title protection and placed numerous public education campaign ads on billboards, buses and other public venues.
Rhode Island has utilized extensive and multiple contacts with students, employers, and legislators to forward the goals of SWRI.
South Dakota established an MSW program.

Tennessee passed multi-level licensure.

Texas was an outstanding advocate for social work reinvestment at the state legislature, submitting numerous pieces of written and oral testimony on health and human service and education issues, meeting with state legislators to communicate reinvestment message, as well as coordinating the state lobby day and educating numerous social workers, social work students, and stakeholders on workforce issues and legislative training.

West Virginia passed social worker safety legislation.

The Wisconsin Chapter of NASW recently held a meeting with the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau to recommend that Family Care agencies (serving the elderly and disabled outside of nursing homes) be required to hire certified and licensed professionals for their case management positions and licensed mental health professionals for their supervisory positions.

SWRI Articles & Publications

- “CSWE Works Toward Social Change at Its 55th Annual Program Meeting and Welcomes the Social Work Reinvestment Act Sponsor”
- “CSWE Advocacy Handbook”
- E.P.I. Education Policy Innovation: Bridge the Gap by Staying Connected: A Newsletter for the HBCU and MSI Community Fall 2010: “Help Wanted: We Need More Social Workers Like the Late Dr. Dorothy I. Height”
- “Social Work Reinvestment: A National Agenda for the Profession of Social Work”
- Workforce Management November 5, 2007: “Clinton Bill Calls for Better Pay: Training in Child Care”

NASW News:

- May 2010: “Dorothy Height, 1912-2010”
- November 2009: “Tennessee Pushes SWRA as Part of Health Reform”
- September 2009: “From the Director: Social Workers Must Be at the Table”
- September 2009: “Reinvestment Act Gets Changes, Additions”
- May 2009: “Reinvestment Act in Senate: SWRA is now in both chambers of Congress”
- May 2009: “Whitney Young Project Unveiled at BPC Conference”
- May 2009: “South Dakota to Offer MSW Program for the First Time”
- March 2009: “Reinvestment Act Reintroduced in House”
- February 2009: “From the President: Time to Reassert Our Critical Role”
- February 2009: “NASW Promotes Agenda”
- February 2009: “Young Project Aims to Teach Leadership”
- February 2009: “Social Work Month to Focus on Recruitment”
- February 2009: “NASW Meets with NAACP”
- November 2008: “Proposal Addresses Shortage of School Social Workers”
- October 2008: “NASW Represented at DNC: Policy Makers Urged to Reinvest in Profession”
- October 2008: “Slaying Renews Safety Concerns”
• October 2008: “Higher Education Act Passes: Law Includes Loan Forgiveness for Social Workers”
• September 2008: “Testimony Reveals Profession’s Direction”
• September 2008: “Milestone for Medicare Payments”
• July 2008: “Support Grows for Reinvestment Act”
• July 2008: “Chapters Work to Promote the Profession”
• June 2008: “Reinvestment Gains Senate Support”
• May 2008: “Word of Reinvestment Push Spreads”
• May 2008: “Strategies Propel Other SWRI Goals”
• April 2008: “Reinvestment Act Introduced in Congress”
• April 2008: “Chapters Do Their Part”
• April 2008: “NASW Sets Legislative Agenda for 2008”
• March 2008: “From the Director: Celebrating Reinvestment”
• March 2008: “PACE Eyes Candidates’ Reinvestment Support”
• January 2008: “Reinvestment Promoted to Educators”
• November 2007: “New Video Promotes the Profession”
• November 2007: “Chapters Developing Reinvestment Initiative Plans”
• October 2007: “Reinvestment-Related Bills Advance”
• September 2007: “Worker Safety Bill Promoted”
• September 2007: “SWRI Advances”
• July 2007: “From the Director: Advocacy: Profession’s Cornerstone”
• July 2007: “Experts Promote Reinvestment Push”
• July 2007: “Federal Social Worker Protection Bill Backed”
• June 2007: “Leaders Focus on Reinvestment Plans”
• June 2007: “Lobby Day Brings Social Workers to the Hill”
• May 2007: “From the Director: Social Work Must Be At the Table”
• May 2007: “Initiative Gaining Momentum: NASW Meeting with Nurses to Review Strategies”
• May 2007: “Congress Recognizes Profession in March”
• March 2007: “From the Director: A Time to Invest in Our Future”
• January 2007: “Reinvestment Push to Start at State Level”
• January 2007: “Loan Relief Urged: Social Workers’ Burden Outlined”
• September 2006: “Policy, Advocacy Eyed”
• September 2006: “Reinvestment Initiative Announced”