

**Rep. Edolphus “Ed” Towns Remarks
Congressional Social Caucus Inaugural Reception
Tuesday, March 15, 2011
Library of Congress**

Good Evening.

I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural gathering of the Congressional Social Work Caucus. This is a very special day. Today is World Social Work Day! Social workers all over the world are participating in events and activities proudly celebrating the work that we do day in and day out without much fanfare and reward. The theme for this year is: “Social Work voices responding to global crises: Together we develop the Agenda.”

I am proud to be a social worker and proud to be counted among the 640,000 social workers in the United States who provide care for the elderly, empowerment to the poor, and hope to children and families all across this country every single day.

Today, I am proud to join my colleagues Susan Davis of California, Lloyd Doggett of Texas, Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, Barbara Lee of California, John Lewis of Georgia, Dave Loebsack of Iowa, Bobby Rush of Illinois, Allyson Schwartz of Pennsylvania, Pete Stark of California, Niki Tsongas of Massachusetts, and Melvin Watt of North Carolina as founding Members of the Congressional Social Work Caucus.

I am excited about the possibilities for our newly created Congressional Social Work Caucus. This Caucus will provide a platform in the House of Representatives where social workers voices can be heard, social workers concerns can be addressed and social work’s best and brightest can serve their fellow Americans in meaningful ways.

Whitney M. Young spoke many times about how important it is for social workers to tell our story. We want to have a stronger voice in the national conversation about what needs to be done to strengthen families, protect the elderly, and make sure children have the opportunity to prosper.

The Congressional Social Work Caucus plans to host a series of public briefings this year to explore the impact professional social workers have on health care, mental health, aging, and child protection outcomes. We want to educate legislators, their staffs, and the public on issues that challenge the social work profession.

I want to see more social workers on the Hill. I urge my colleagues to find a place in your office for a social work student intern. They are industrious workers.

Social workers are at the frontlines of defending the old, the disabled, children, and families at all economic levels. We are a critical part of the safety net that keeps people from falling through the cracks. And—in these times—our work is more important than ever. There are social workers in Japan providing trauma and crises interventions. There are social workers in Libya and Egypt and other volatile spots in the Middle East providing assistance to war-torn refugees.

Today there are social workers in every corner of the globe doing what we know how to do best—helping people in distress, people who need to be empowered, people who need to find a little hope. And, today we gather to celebrate these noble women and men who work is often done in obscurity and without fanfare. Today we want to let the world know that the planet is a far, far better place because of the dedication and commitment of social workers.

As I close, I want to thank my friends at the National Association of Social Workers, particularly Dr. Betsy Clark and Elizabeth Hoffler, for the outstanding job they did organizing this event. We have worked together over the years—on the Social Work Reinvestment Act and other projects—and I look forward to continuing our special relationship. And, I want to thank Mit Joyner for her leadership at the Council on Social Work Education and the fine work you do in preparing students to become professional social workers.

Thank you all for coming out this evening. What we do as social workers today will mean a better tomorrow for all.

God bless.