

# How Can Social Workers Get Involved

## 1. Contribute to CalPACE

NASW and CalPACE advocate for the profession and social justice in several ways. NASW employs a full-time

Director of Government Relations and Political Affairs (Lobbyist) who represents NASW members in meetings with legislators and committee hearings about proposed legislation. The Director also attends Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) meetings and collaborates with other groups.

## 2. Volunteer in political campaigns

Campaigns are always in need of volunteers to place phone calls encouraging others to vote, distribute literature, host fundraising parties, or put up lawn signs. Volunteer with a friend or partner to make it more fun!

## 3. Run for elected office

Contact CalPACE and your local political party as the first steps toward applying your knowledge and skills in the political arena.

## 4. Vote

This is the bare minimum that each social worker should be doing to satisfy our Code of Ethics requirements. Vote for CalPACE-endorsed candidates who will champion policies that empower individuals and communities.



# But Why Should We Elect Social Workers to Public Office?

There isn't a single social worker whose day-to-day activities related to social work are not affected by elected officials. Federal and state policies and laws affect our social work profession and practice, and therefore, it is essential to elect legislators who share NASW's policy positions as stated in *Social Work Speaks*, which is the NASW's publication of NASW policy statements.

To make a cash or silent auction donation to CalPACE, or if you have any questions about CalPACE, please contact the Government Relations Director at:  
**(916) 379-7597 • (800) 538-2565 x2112**  
[govdir@naswca.org](mailto:govdir@naswca.org)



National Association of Social Workers  
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

## NASW-California Chapter

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# Do you know these social workers?



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# What is the CalPACE Political Action Committee?

**T**he California Political Action for Candidate Election (CalPACE) is NASW California's political action arm. As a political action committee, CalPACE endorses and financially contributes to state and local level candidates who are social workers or who support social work values and NASW's policy agenda irrespective of party affiliation. The endorsement decisions are made by the CalPACE Committee which are appointed by the Chapter President biennially. CalPACE contributions come directly from NASW member donations to the CalPACE committee. Exercise your commitment to social justice and political action by donating to CalPACE!

## How Does CalPACE and NASW Help

### Elections

CalPACE participates in elections by funding candidates who are social workers or uphold social work values. We also work to mobilize NASW members to vote for these candidates. CalPACE also works to keep members informed on statewide propositions that affect the social work profession or those social workers serve.

### Legislative Advocacy Days

Every spring, NASW and CalPACE hold an event at the state capitol in Sacramento. Each year, nearly 1,100 members gather to gain hands-

on experience with priority social work-related public policy issues. Event participants take that experience and advocate with legislators and their staff the very next day at the state capitol.

### Involvement in Policymaking

NASW and CalPACE advocate for the profession and social justice in several ways. NASW employs a full-time Director of Government Relations and Political Affairs (Lobbyist) who represents NASW members in meetings with legislators and committee hearings about proposed legislation. The Director also attends Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) meetings and collaborates with other groups.

## Why Should Social Workers Get Involved?

“It is easier to spend a few months and some money electing the right people than to spend years and a lot of money trying to get the wrong people to do the right thing.”  
– Senator Debbie Stabenow, MSW

According to *Social Work Speaks*, social workers possess a wealth and breadth of knowledge about human needs and behavior, service delivery, systems theory, and the effects of public policy. Therefore, we are in a unique position to participate in politics and elections as well as advocate for public policy and legislation that upholds social work values.

Many social workers are hesitant to be involved due to concerns over party politics or partisanship. Unfortunately, the U.S. political systems are largely about choosing among candidates and not issues. If an individual or

group wants to be able to influence electoral or legislative outcomes, they have to make partisan choices. Social workers must be involved in the election of candidates and in the legislative process, as dictated by our ethics, by being agents of social change and serving our clients both in and out of the office.



**Barbara Lee, MSW**  
13th Congressional District



**Tony Thurmond, MSW, MSLP**  
15th CA Assembly District



**Susan Talamantes Eggman, MSW, LCSW, PhD**  
13th CA Assembly District

All of these social workers have been elected to public office through the help of NASW and donations from our PACE committees, and they are not the only ones. There are many social workers throughout California who have been elected to public office.