

2021 Legislative Agenda

The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social workers and seeks to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families and communities through its work and advocacy. The NASW-NC Legislative Agenda is designed to support and advance the role of the social work profession and sound social policies in adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics throughout the legislative session.

This is a working document that is not exhaustive. As legislative bills are introduced, they are reviewed and their impact on the profession is assessed. Various levels of engagement on given issues range from “monitoring” to “active lobbying.” For more information about any of these items and/or to assist in the advancement of these issues, please contact the NASW-NC Chapter Director of Advocacy, Policy and Legislation, Kay Castillo at advocacy.naswnc@socialworkers.org.

Support for the Social Work Profession

- **Eliminate the exemption for state and local government employees from the Social Worker Certification and Licensure Act** to protect the title of Social Worker to those with social work degrees.
- **Advocate for the social worker’s role in Medicaid Transformation** through care management, clinical practice, and integrated care settings.
- **Increase funding for school social workers** to better address the behavioral health and socioeconomic needs of students in public schools.
- **Continue telehealth policies** that were put into place as a result of COVID-19. These include no pre-authorization, paying the same rate as in-person visits, and flexibility for platforms used.
- **Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity:** cover and reimburse behavioral health services equivalent to primary care visits.

Increase Socioeconomic Equality Through Social Work Practices

- **Advocate for the abolition of the school-to-prison pipeline** through increased school funding, the reduction of school policing, and appropriate education options to promote racial equity.
- **Make it illegal to practice conversion therapy on minors and adults with disabilities.** This requires the expansion of North Carolina’s anti-discrimination laws to include gender identity, sexual orientation, and military or veteran status.
- **Support aging populations by advocating for** increased access to behavioral health care, additional supports for caregivers, and funding directed towards Long Term Residential Care Facilities and Adult Protective Services.
- **Prevent child marriage for anyone under the age of 18.**
- **Oppose any and all efforts to restrict access to abortion and reproductive health care,** allow providers the ability to fully practice within the scope of their profession, and grant young people access to factual, comprehensive, and medically accurate sexuality education.

Advance Systemic Reform Through Social Justice and Advocacy

- **COVID-19 response:** Increase testing in private and public prisons, homeless shelters, nursing homes, schools, detention centers, group homes, and other congregate settings, provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), increase contact tracing, and provide access to vaccinations.
- **Advocate to expand Medicaid,** and redress disparities in the delivery of care and number of health professionals within marginalized communities.
- **Expand behavioral health resources,** recovery-oriented care for those with substance use disorder, and disability services across the state of North Carolina.
- **Support systemic decriminalization and decarceration** efforts as they pertain to low-level offenses, work to overhaul the cash bail system, and reclassify crimes.
- **Support systemic reforms** that aim to eliminate mandatory minimum sentencing, reduce racial bias in police departments through training for officers, and redirect funding from the police to better support communities in need of trauma support and access to behavioral health services through funding for social workers and those trained in crisis response.
- **Advocate for the protection of immigrants' rights** by ending the 287(g) Program with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
- **Support environmental legislation** that aims to protect and preserve the environment from destructive human activity.
- **Advocate for improved access to affordable housing** by reinvesting in neighborhoods, increasing local funding, providing better access to homeownership, and offering incentives to urban developers.