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May/June/July 2024

Removal of DEI From UNC System: What This Means for Social Work

By Valerie Arendt, MSW, MPP
NASW-NC Executive Director

(With input from several NC social work faculty members)

Many universities across the United States have Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices aimed at diversifying staff and to promote inclusivity for faculty and students. In March 2023, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill banning DEI initiatives in public colleges. States across the country are following Florida's lead in legislation, as we have seen with [North Carolina's SB49 Parents' Bill of Rights](#), which was modeled after Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law.

More than 30 states have introduced or passed over 100 bills to ban or regulate DEI initiatives in 2024. In addition to Florida, DEI bans have been enacted in Texas, Tennessee, and Utah. Alabama's Governor signed their DEI ban in public colleges into law in March 2024 and it authorizes state agencies to "discipline or terminate employees or contractors who violate" the law.

On April 18, 2024, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors' Committee on University Governance voted unanimously to repeal and replace the UNC System's current DEI policy. The [UNC System](#) oversees 17 universities in North Carolina serving 250,000 students per year. The policy will go to the full 24-member board for a vote at their May meeting.

Why is this happening?

Over the course of a decade, the North Carolina General Assembly leadership has removed gubernatorial appointments from the UNC Board of Governors. As of September 2023, the North Carolina Legislature has given itself full appointments for all 24 board members. The Board of Governors [controls appointments](#) to the individual universities' boards of trustees as well as chancellors and presidents. You can view a list of the Board's 24 voting members [here](#).

The efforts to remove executive powers, diluting the separation of power, have been a work in progress and the action to remove DEI from the UNC system is the result of this significant power shift. In March 2023, a General Assembly commission requested information about DEI trainings and their cost to the University of North Carolina system's institutions.

In addition to this removal of executive power, the legislature passed [SB512 Greater Accountability for Boards/Commissions](#) in October 2024, which strips the governor's ability to appoint [dozens of members of state boards and commissions](#) that deal with issues ranging from transportation planning to environmental regulation, wildlife, public health, economic development and more.

DEI Continued on Page 16



Social Workers Advocate!

NASW-NC staff and members participated in the Association Executives of North Carolina to kick off the 2024 North Carolina Legislative Short Session on April 24, 2024

(L to R: Representative Carolyn Logan, NASW-NC Board Member Rachel Mathew, NASW-NC Board President Elect Karen McLeod Ray, Senator Rachel Hunt, NASW-NC Executive Director Valerie Arendt)

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Reflections and Thank You's



As my tenure as President of the NASW-NC Chapter board draws to a close, alongside my departure from the board itself, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable journey we've embarked upon over the past several years. Stepping into my role in 2018, our board was amidst a strategic overhaul, setting ambitious goals for the ensuing four years. Despite the unforeseen challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, we persevered and not only met but exceeded our objectives.

The Covid-19 pandemic catalyzed a transformative shift towards virtual engagement, enabling broader participation in NASW-NC conferences, a feat previously hindered by financial constraints. Our establishment of the Equity and Inclusion Committee, culminating in the disbursement of scholarships for the third consecutive year, stands as a testament to our commitment to fostering equity and inclusion within our profession. Moreover, we've witnessed tangible advancements, including alterations to the licensure process and the attainment of title protection for social workers. Concurrently, our relentless advocacy for enhanced insurance reimbursement rates and licensure compacts underscores our unwavering dedication to the betterment of our field.

Throughout my six-year tenure, a realization emerged—that as social workers, we often falter in advocating for our own needs and prioritizing self-care. Recognizing the connection between the two, we've endeavored to imbue our ethos with a renewed emphasis on self-advocacy and well-being. With the recent integration of self-care into our code of ethics, its paramount importance in safeguarding against burnout and attrition within our ranks has become indisputable. Hence, every board meeting now reserves dedicated time for nurturing self-care.

In closing, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the extraordinary NASW-NC staff who have been the backbone of our chapter, their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts serving as an inspiration to us all. Additionally, I am profoundly indebted to the exceptional individuals—both present and past board members—with whom I've had the privilege of collaborating, learning, and evolving. Their contributions have not only enriched my journey but have also reaffirmed the profound impact of our collective endeavors. Indeed, it's through these connections forged in service to our profession that I've encountered remarkable individuals whom I might never have crossed paths with had I not embarked upon this transformative journey in 2018. ●

**CLICK HERE FOR
NASW-NC'S 2024
VOTING GUIDE...**

**MORE INFO TO BE ADDED THROUGHOUT
THE SUMMER AND FALL!**

SOCIAL WORKERS VOTE





Valerie Arendt, MSW, MPP

Executive Director

Defunding Public Education: A Social Work Issue

A recent survey conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center found that fewer than half of Americans can name all three branches of U.S. government. Around 26 percent of respondents could not name any First Amendment freedoms.

Education is the cornerstone of democracy. Defunding public education is not just threatening the quality of schooling, it's also fostering a generation of uneducated voters, threatening the very essence of democracy.

North Carolina ranks 48th for education funding and those in power at the North Carolina General Assembly have systematically and strategically underfunded public education in our state over the past two decades.

The North Carolina Supreme Court has repeatedly taken up the *Leandro v. State* case since the suit was filed in 1994. In 2022, the Supreme Court upheld a ruling that the state must release over \$1.7 billion to pay for teachers, principals and programs for kids from pre-K to high school.

But in February 2024, the NC Supreme Court — with a new Republican majority — heard new arguments over whether their predecessors were wrong in demanding that money. It is fully anticipated that the Supreme Court will overturn its own ruling.

During the 2022-23 fiscal year, North Carolina finished with a more than \$3 billion surplus, and the education budget fell \$443 million short of fully funding the Leandro Plan for the year. Last year, instead of fully funding public education, the NCGA appropriations provided for \$900 million universal private school vouchers by removing all income eligibility requirements for recipients starting with the 2024-25 school year.

At the heart of this issue lies a stark reality: when public education is underfunded, the quality of learning suffers. The consequences of this erosion of educational quality extend far beyond the classroom. **An uneducated public is more susceptible to misinformation, manipulation, and political fanaticism, undermining the integrity of the democratic process.** In an era of alternative facts, the ability to discern truth from fiction is more critical than ever. Yet, when basic education is neglected, critical thinking skills erode, leaving citizens vulnerable to propaganda and ideological manipulation.

Moreover, the impact of uneducated voters reverberates throughout society, perpetuating cycles of inequality and disenfranchisement. In communities already marginalized by poverty, discrimination, and systemic oppression, the effects are particularly pronounced. When access to quality education is denied, the cycle of poverty persists, locking generations into a cycle of disadvantage and despair.

Addressing the crisis of uneducated voters requires a multifaceted approach. First, we must commit to fully funding public education, ensuring that every student has access to high-quality schooling, regardless of their background or zip code. This means investing in smaller class sizes, modern facilities, and comprehensive support services, like school social workers, to meet the diverse needs of students.

In the end, the fate of democracy rests in the hands of its citizens. The people elect those who fund public education. By investing in public education and empowering all students to reach their full potential, we can ensure that democracy thrives and that every voice is heard.

Informed citizens are democracy's best defense

Social workers have an ethical obligation to "facilitate informed participation" which means informing North Carolinians about these issues, assisting individuals with getting valid voter identification, registering individuals to vote, and getting out the vote during the election. It is so easy to become overwhelmed by all that is happening at the state and federal level. That is what politicians want: uninformed, uneducated voters and certain populations not to vote at all. This is why **voting is social work.** ●

NASW-NC Chapter Staff

Executive Director

Valerie Arendt, MSW, MPP

director.naswnc@socialworkers.org

Director of Advocacy and Policy

Lauren Zingraff, MSW

advocacy.naswnc@socialworkers.org

Director of Membership and Communication

Seth Maid, MSW

membership.naswnc@socialworkers.org

Operations Manager

Kristen Carter, QAS

operations.naswnc@socialworkers.org

Education Program Manager

Vanessa Hines, MSW

education.naswnc@socialworkers.org

Communication Assistant

Mary Choe, Psy.M.

membershipassociate.naswnc@socialworkers.org

919.828.9650

www.naswnc.org

NASW Mission

Founded in 1955, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with more than 120,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain standards for the profession, and to advance sound social policies. NASW also contributes to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its work and advocacy.

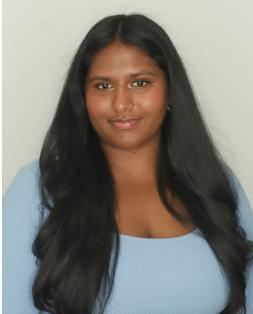


2024 NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Award Winners

The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) has named five North Carolina social work students as the 2024 [NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Student Award](#) recipients. This award supports the vision of inclusive chapter membership and supports students pursuing a variety of social work specialties. These recipients were selected based on their commitment to incorporating and promoting equity and inclusion into their social work practice, their high academic achievement, and their leadership.

Rosa Amburose, North Carolina State University BSW Student

Rose Amburose is a BSW student at North Carolina State University who is being honored for her remarkable journey and tireless efforts for social justice causes. Rose found her calling for social work from the journey of self-discovery through the experiences of marginalized communities and inequalities. Through her studies and activism, Rose has demonstrated a profound dedication to uplifting marginalized voices and challenging systemic injustices. Rose founded student organizations, led advocacy initiatives on reproductive rights, climate change and voter rights, and inspired others to advocate for a more equitable and inclusive society.



Rose's professor and mentor Karey Harwood, Ph.D., NC State Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies says Rose is "An exceptional student who has overcome many obstacles in her life. She is propelled forward by curiosity, generosity, hard work, and strength of character."

Evangeline Eure, Johnson C. Smith University MSW Student

Evangeline Eure will receive her MSW from Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), where she has led initiatives addressing health disparities within communities of color and served in key leadership roles in student organizations. A U.S. Army Veteran with extensive experience in public service, Evangeline aspires to advocate for systemic change and racial justice within government agencies. Evangeline's current internship with the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch of the North Carolina Division of Public Health includes a project on health equity showing the disparities in tobacco use among African Americans in North Carolina. Her commitment to serving vulnerable populations, including unhoused Veterans, is reflected in her post-graduation plans to establish a nonprofit organization aimed at providing transitional services and affordable housing solutions.



JCSU MSW Program Director Melvin Herring, PhD, MSW says, "I have had the pleasure of working with Ms. Eure in her role as a fellow in the Charlotte Racial Justice Consortium (CRJC) during her tenure as an undergraduate student at JCSU... Ms. Eure was a major contributor to our JCSU team... she co-led the development of a presentation on the importance of voting rights and how past and present policies have disproportionately impacted communities of color."

Jacob Hoyt, UNC Chapel Hill MSW Student

Jacob is pursuing his MSW from UNC Chapel Hill and is making an impact in the field of social work by being recognized for his exceptional commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in both academic and professional settings. Jacob obtained his Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from North Carolina State University and interned at the Raleigh Boys Club. His subsequent role as a NC State College Advising Corps College Adviser led him to teaching life skills related to financial aid literacy and empowering students who often tended to be overlooked by the education system. Jacob managed the College Ambassadors Club providing leadership opportunities for historically underrepresented students in their school and local community, and working on initiatives towards higher education attainment.



Jacob is currently a UNC Chapel Hill 1789 Mentor supporting identified first-year students to ensure all academic, social and emotional needs are being met. After graduation, Jacob is interested in working with mixed-status families and conducting research to dismantle barriers to mental health services.

Jacob's academic advisor Tauchiana Williams, DWS, LCSW describes him as "An outstanding individual with powerful personal experience that ground his desire to work with a mixed-race population whose academic prowess, leadership acumen, and unwavering dedication to social work make him a truly exceptional candidate."

Nylia Jeffreys, East Carolina University BSW Student

Nylia Jeffreys will graduate in May 2024 with her BSW from East Carolina University (ECU). As a Youth Staff member at her local Boys and Girls Club, Nylia consistently demonstrates a commitment to underserved populations with cultural sensitivity and humility. In her future career as a School Social Worker, she aspires to remove barriers to academic success for students from underrepresented communities, providing crucial support and resources to improve their overall well-being.



E and I Continued on Page 15



Welcome New Members!

NASW-NC would like to welcome the following new members who joined during the months of February, March, and April! Thank you for choosing to support your profession and advocate for social work values by joining NASW.

Coastal District (A)

Keosha Arnold
Melanie Barwick
Pinesia Faison
Laurie Girdwood
Thomas Harless
Makayla Harris
Makayla Hathaway
Paul Hendee
Magen Henley
Megan Hiner
Marly Hinestroza
Wanda Joyner
Kristen Lewis
Ashley Martin
Sherrine Oates
Shannon Otu
Chelsea Patrick
Laura Pender
Shannon Perry
Merry Rainey
Trinitie Smith
Dominique Smith
KaLynn Toler
Haleigh Ward
Kendra White
Alexis Williams

Central District (B)

Jordyn Adair
Mary Adams
Rose Amburose
Jadaya Asor-Sallaah
Julia Beron
Chrissty Berry
JenDina Bowers
Anne Bradford
Kla Brannon
Jennifer Brasington
Hannah Broome
Jamie Brown
Jillian Buckley
Georgia Byrd
Jennifer Campos
Christian Cannon
Jennifer Castillo
Kendyl Cheek
Charles Daly
Erin Daniell
A.R. Ditesheim
Justin Eldreth
Phylicia Evans
Nettie Gibbs
Kawanda Hall
Danielle Harris
Wendy Helmick
Abigail Hite
Alissa Hoerner

Maya Holt
Noah Hood
Rebecca Howard
Melinda Hunt
Kathleen Jackson
Carlton Johnson
Gracie Langley
Sierra LaPlante
Candace Lightheart
Joan Loftin
Monnie Lunsford
Jodi Marshall
Lauren Montgomery Page
Anna Ney
Joseph Park
Larissa Parson
Elizabeth Parson
Jennifer Perez
Akia Pittman
Brooke Reiner
Toynetta Robinson
Sydney Russell
Alexandria Schmidt
Elizabeth Segal
Kasey Smith
Sara Smith
Teisha Spaid
Alison Sweet
Spencer Tackett
Renaulda Thomas
Michelle Touch
Tyia Underdue
Tia Wade
Emily Weidman
Faye Wilkes
Kimesa Wilkins
Ikeya Williams
Michelle Wood
Megan Wood
Ramir Woodard
Jane Young

Piedmont District (C)

Samantha Atkins
Imari Attaway
Patrick Brown
Jada Foster
Lorenzo Gomez-Gadd
Whitney Gregg
Morgan Halsey
Miya Jackson
Lacy Johnson
ShaRhonda Kemp
Savannah Klischer
Sarah Lempka
Gabrielle Leslie
Shauna Little
Jose Luviano-Mondragon
Stacey Madera

Tamara McLaughlin
Deidre Montgomery
Jaime Moreland
Miguel Palestino-Garcia
Jennifer Petrisor
Jessica Phipps
Amaria Rankins
Haley Raper
Grace Ratcliff
Kristen Roberts
Rachel Roberts
Andrina Scott
Kathryn Smith
Megan Stone
Rebecca Stuckey
Sherita Sutton
Na'Kiya Thompson
Caroline Travis
Amber Waake
Liora Yalof

South Piedmont District (D)

Ty-Shinta Adams
Michaela Adams
Caroline Al-Khalil
Jaida Allen
Nyree Beachum
Elhanan Bone
Marsha Bright
Na'Brittany Byers
Amanda Capriato
Jesse Coward
Erica Dardon
J-Nelle Dean
Kayla Deatherage
Carrie Dickenson
Lianna D'Orazio
Hannah Dunham
Ashley Dunlap
Rachel Ellison
Janae Fulton
Wydia Gavin
Quinn Glover
Samari Grant
Javonne Green
Maleia Griffin
Marissa Hall
Jeson Hall
Allison Haney
Diane Helton
Sarah Herrera
Brianna Hicks
Talton Hobbs
Brittany Hodges
Lauren Holland
Tkeya Isom
Candie Johnson
Tjrilmel Jones

Jamaica Kersey
Andre Lanton
Christina Lynch
Kelly Manning
Rebecca Martin
Makala McGowan
Kevin McKay-Carroll
Hope McNish
Turner Medicott
Uwimana Cynthia
Mwangaza
Ayden Oakley
Lynnette Owens
Kiersten Preckel
Jesse Pritchard
Monteria Reaves
Alexis Reeves
Emily Riggleman
Elizabeth Robertson
Anna Rogers
Hector Rojas
Karen Ross
Anna Shelton
Erica Smalla
Terri Smalls
Ella Smith
Lashonda Smith
Alyssa Thao
Sarah Thomas
Jambah Warner
Jennifer White
Cali Wickert
Faith Williams
McKenna Williams
Shauna Willoughby
Taylor Woods

Jenna Powers
Madi Reynik
Ashley Riddle
Heather Shumate
Lindsey Sparks
Sandra Thomas
Cameron Williams

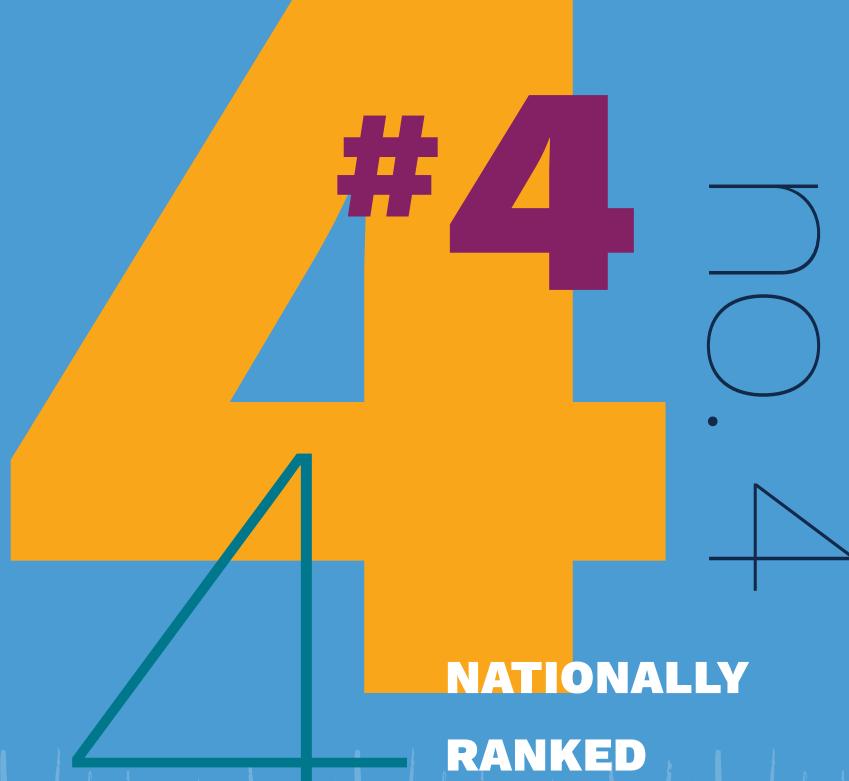
South Central District (F)

Breanna Allen
Kimberly Ball
Selena Beasley
Patricia Brenner
Liam Brew
Arleen Burgos
Morgan Campbell
Christan Chavis
Leslie Chavis
Pauline Coston
Ella Crumpler
Allison Daniel
Bianka Decilia
Flecia Edwards
Linda Evans
Madeline Everett
James Granger
Lydia Griffin
Antonio Griffin
Bryan Irvin
Tisha Jacobs
Laura Johnson
McKenzie Keeler
Wendy Locklear
Jennifer McCullen
Heather Miller
Travis Miner
Felicia Mitchell-McNeill
Jordan Quick
Crystal Rampey
Jordyn Reuter
Noemi Rivera
Tiffany Robinson
Patricia Rummage
Ashlyn Sanders
Isis Scott
Paul Smokowski
Kathleen Spearman
Lisa Sullivan
Sanea Tinsley
Kaylyn Wehmas-Rice
Moriah Yager
Qiandrea Younger

Western District (E)

Cassandra Adler
Marisela Aguililon
Michelle Allen
Alexandra Alspaugh
Cara Berlin
Haley Britton
Brandie Brown
Shaun Bryson
Jason Camp
McKenna Casey
Arista Clifton
Chloe Gobel
Russell Golemon
Rachael Harris
Shaneka Haynes
McKenna Jarrard
Amanda Johnston
Amber King
Margaret Knuckles
Cedric Mansell
Elizabeth Milligan





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Dayna Guido
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NASW-NC Ethics Committee Member

Weaving a Collective Tapestry of Ethical Manifestos

The NASW-NC Asheville Local Program Unit (LPU) hosted their annual Conference on March 1, 2024. The title of the conference, **Reconciliation and Forgiveness**, is a theme in our modern times. These words are abstract nouns and refer to ideas, qualities, and concepts to which we might nod our heads and utter words of agreement. The NASW Code of Ethics (2017) speaks to these concepts in Standard 6.04 (d) Social Workers Ethical Responsibility to the Broader Society:

Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

Our two speakers inspired us to take action in the broader society. Debi Thibeault, DSW, presented “Honor the Land: A Personal and Professional Responsibility.” Todd Lester, from Braver Angels, followed with “Depolarizing Within Fundamentals.”

We accepted a challenge during the keynote address, “Weaving a Collective Tapestry of Ethical Manifestos,” to take these conceptual statements and write action statements, **Ethical Manifestos**, declaring our intentions to enhance human well-being and help meet the needs of all people. Groups formed in person and online to incorporate the concepts learned throughout the conference combined with the NASW Code of Ethics to write one sentence Ethical Manifestos. In true social work fashion we came together in all our diverse glory, and wrote the following Ethical Manifestos:

- *We are all working toward recognizing our biases to allow the work needed to bridge the gap between ourselves and others.*
- *Our common ground is fertilized by depolarization filled by bridging the differences weeded by walking a mile in my shoes to nourish Mother Earth and harvest Social Justice for all.*
- *We believe people are diverse and worthy of affirmation, and are lifted when treated with compassion, respect, and genuine positive regard.*
- *We are all working toward an inclusive community that respects each individual's experience as unique and equal in determining our standards of living.*
- *We believe that each person, regardless of their gender, belief systems, ethnicity, cultures, abilities,*

or other personal differences, has equally valuable strengths that strengthen our communities.

- *We aspire to show kindness and respect toward ourselves and the rest of the natural world living with courage and generous interpretations.*
- *We acknowledge that all viewpoints are valid no matter how different, and that we can listen to those points of view free from judgment and prejudice.*
- *We will serve with compassion, inclusivity, and support to meet them where they're at, judgment free.*
- *Our common ground is respecting the dignity of all through awareness, curiosity, and acceptance to promote peace and justice.*
- *We believe in the inherent worth of all beings and that equitable access is a human right.*
- *In solidarity we believe we are all one, with differences, dependent on each other for the survival of all.*
- *We believe in the importance of depolarization to assist in bridging relationships while collaboratively fostering commitment to a culture of social justice.*
- *We, as social workers, believe we are all interconnected beings with varying strengths, knowledge, insight, experiences, and attributes that are both a valuable and a necessary contribution to our collective well being and growth.*
- *We believe in respecting people's differences and values and desire to pursue social justice.*

First, read aloud the above sentences and absorb their meanings into your body. Immerse yourself into the fullness of being an ethical social worker. Then, gather together with social work colleagues and take the challenge. Write a one sentence Ethical Manifesto declaring your intention to uphold the NASW Code of Ethics Standard 6.04 (d) Social Workers Ethical Responsibility to the Broader Society. And then, live your intention, in all your social worker glory.

You can request consultation from the Chapter Ethics Committee's consultation service by emailing us at: naswncethics@gmail.com. Please note that this service is free and available only to NASW-NC members who have questions about cases in which they are directly involved. This article is not intended to provide legal advice. NASW members who have questions with a legal component, can contact NASW's Members-Only Legal Consultation Line (202-408-8600 ext. 592), Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET. ●

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National Association of Social Workers
NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

May-June-July 2024 | 7



Vanessa Hines, MSW

Education Program Manager

DEI Continuing Education is Essential, Despite the Rise of Anti-DEI Policies

In recent years, we have seen the rise of states implementing laws and policies to ban Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs and initiatives. These anti-DEI policies are especially targeting colleges and universities and are attempting to limit the history and information being taught in higher education. This not only can have an impact on social work education in universities but also on the type of continuing education being offered and recognized outside of college.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core tenets that are woven within the fabric of social work. The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) outlines that social workers have ethical obligations to conduct all social work practice with cultural humility and competence, and to address social injustices. Section 6.04(c) of the NASW Code of Ethics states: "Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people".

So, what can we do to make sure we get the education we need without putting ourselves in violation of certain legal restrictions?

First, social workers should always know where these policies stand in their state and double-check that the training they are interested in will be accepted by their employer or

licensing entity if it is required to submit their continuing education. As more anti-DEI policies arise, social workers in higher education or even those in roles funded by their state could see an impact in what continuing education their employer recognizes and may need to make plans to cover their own education. For example, if a state employer decides due to policy not to pay for certain DEI training, then a social worker may want to start their own education fund to cover the training desired.

Social workers can also get creative in how they obtain and sharpen their DEI knowledge and skills. Utilizing professional social work community groups or even supervision can be a great opportunity to discuss ideas with other social workers and identify different ways professionals in the field promote sensitivity and knowledge about oppression and cultural/ethnic diversity.

Lastly, many social work programs have provided social workers with the knowledge and skills to analyze public policies and even engage in legislative advocacy (like attending Advocacy Days). You can always take some time to gain a better understanding of anti-DEI laws and consider the ways you can engage with legislators in discussions about the impact of these laws.

For social workers, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles will always be necessary, and it is imperative that we seek every opportunity to learn and grow in these areas, get creative with our education, and be open to challenge the harmful laws being implemented in our states. ●

North Carolina House Bill 303: Challenges to Civic Engagement in North Carolina

By Sebastian Prandoni, MSW Student
NASW-NC Board member

This article presents a brief overview of North Carolina [House Bill 303](#), 'Reduce Early One-Stop Voting Days,' which is currently pending in the North Carolina general Assembly. This article is intended to provide further insight into how HB 303 may be creating additional barriers to civic engagement, and how the bill fails to stay abreast of current voter trends which are increasingly reliant on early voting. While it is beyond the scope of this article, it is important for potential readers to note additional elements including the implementation of voter ID laws, reduction of ballot drop boxes, partisan poll observer rules, and limitations on mobile-voting stations (Greenberger, 2023).

In summary, the passage of House Bill 303, 'Reduce Early One-Stop Voting Days,' by the NC General Assembly, would impose a 9-day cap on early voting, marking an 8-day reduction from current law. A 9-day early voting period is not uncommon nationwide; however, it falls well below the national average of 20 days (state-by-state early voting periods range from 3 to 46 days) according to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#). As of March 2024, early

in-person voting is available in forty-six states, D.C., Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, while four states – Alabama, Delaware, Mississippi, and New Hampshire – do not offer early voting outside of excused cases.

How might the truncated early-voting window impact voter turnout in North Carolina? To answer this question, it is necessary to look at shifts in the voting landscape. While the reduction of polling sites is one of many indicators of efforts to suppress voter turnout, it is, as will describe in further detail below, directly related to the changes put forth by House Bill 303.

In 2018, the Republican Super Majority overrode Governor Cooper's veto of Senate Bill 325, The Uniform & Expanded Early Voting Act. Contrary to relevant research, which placed an emphasis on the number of early voting sites over the number of hours sites were open to voters, Republicans set a fixed window of time during which polling sites were required to be open. Such a measure created expenditures so astronomically high that counties with limited resources, particularly rural communities, were forced to close dozens of sites.

HB 303 Continued on Page 15



Lauren Zingraff, MSW

Director of Advocacy and Policy
Registered Lobbyist

The NC General Assembly is Back in (Short) Session

The North Carolina General Assembly 2024 Short Session begins on April 24, 2024. Short sessions are held on even years, while long sessions are held during odd numbered years. NC House Speaker Tim Moore (R) has been quoted as saying, "When we come in for short session, guys, it's going to be the short session." (NC Insider / State Affairs Pro, 4/11/24).

While we are not sure how long the General Assembly will be in Raleigh, there are several legislative that are expected to directly impact NASW-NC members and the communities we serve.

Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact Bill

[Senate Bill 718](#) – Social Work Interstate Licensure Compact Bill is NASW-NC's main legislative priority during the 2024 short session.

The Social Work Compact creation was initiated by the Department of Defense to promote licensure portability for military spouses. Many Republican lawmakers, who have the supermajority in both the NC House and Senate, support military populations. The bill's primary sponsor is Senator Joyce Krawiec, who has announced her plans to retire at the end of the 2024 session. The compact does have bi-partisan support in the NC Senate and was referred to the committee on Rules and Operations on April 10, 2023. It was not subjected to crossover as it was not tied to appropriations. NASW-NC has already been working with lawmakers all year about supporting and passing SB 718 during the short session.

The Social Work Compact goes into effect when at least seven different states pass it. This is required for the Compact Commission to be established. As of writing this article, ten states have now passed the Social Work Interstate Licensing Compact Bill!

The first bill to pass the legislation was Missouri on July 7, 2023. The other bills where it is law are South Dakota, Utah, Washington State, Kentucky, Virginia, Kansas, Nebraska, Vermont, and Maine.

Additional states will be able to join the Compact Commission as soon as the legislation is passed in their state. The legislation has been introduced in 19 other states, including here in North Carolina.

You can see more about the states that have [introduced the compact here](#).

Thank you to the NASW chapters who took the lead in each of the states that have both introduced and ratified the compact.

Please be on the lookout for Advocacy Alerts & updates from us on how you can help us reach out to your legislators at the right time to help get it passed.

You can learn more about the Compact Bill by reading the [NASW Press Release](#).

Other Short Session Legislation

Other legislative issues may be voted on during the 2024 short session. It is important to remember that the Republicans hold a supermajority in both the NC House and NC Senate. Due to this, they can potentially override Governor Cooper's veto on any legislation.

Immigration. [House Bill 10](#) - Require Sheriffs to Cooperate with ICE: This bill interferes with communities' and sheriffs' decisions about local resources and priorities, exposes sheriffs and counties to expensive lawsuits for constitutional violations, and erodes community trust in law enforcement. This bill passed the NC House in 2023 but the NC Senate never brought it to a vote. With the state and national Republicans making immigration a key platform for the 2024 elections, this bill has been placed on the NCGA calendar. If passed, resulting deportations will constitute death sentences for those jettisoned back to countries overrun by poverty, war, and state violence. The bill further demands that local law enforcement turn in not only immigrants, but anyone whose immigration status "is unknown." **NASW-NC Opposes This Bill.**

Changes to Election Laws: The NC General Assembly passed several new election laws in 2023. There are now several election-related lawsuits moving through the courts. NASW-NC anticipates there could be some revisions to some of the laws depending on the outcome of the court cases.

[Senate Bill 747](#) - Election Law Changes: A dangerous election bill that makes it harder for people, especially college students away from home and people of color, to vote and for their votes to count.

Among other changes that restrict voting, Senate Bill 747:

- Shortens the time an absentee ballot can be accepted to 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, even if a delay is the fault of the US Postal Service, potentially disenfranchising thousands of voters.
- Requires an unreliable and unworkable "signature match" in certain counties.
- Makes it too easy for absentee ballots to get thrown out for minor issues.
- Fails to properly fund elections at the county and state level.

[Senate Bill 749](#) – No Partisan Advantage in Elections: SB 749 would require the State Board of Elections to have an equal number of Republicans and Democrats and have all members be appointed by legislative leaders, rather than the governor. Currently, the board is structured to have a 3-2 majority of members from the governor's party.

A unanimous bipartisan three-judges Superior Court panel struck down elections board changes included in Senate Bill 749. On March 13, 2024, Senate Leader Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore asked the North Carolina Court of Appeals to review the three-judge panel's ruling favoring Governor Cooper.

NASW-NC Strongly Opposes Both Bills.

Governor Releases 2024 Budget

Governor Roy Cooper released his budget adjustment based on the State of North Carolina's \$1 billion dollar surplus.

Governor Cooper again included \$10 Million Dollars for Restoration of Master's Pay for School Social Workers.

Legislative Continued on Page 10



NASW-NC Social Policy Priority: Common Sense Gun Legislation

By Lauren Zingraff, MSW
NASW-NC Director of Policy and Advocacy

One of NASW-NC's social policy priorities is Common Sense Gun Legislation. As of 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly has passed legislation that advocates say pose safety risks to North Carolinians and disproportionately affect people of color and rural communities.

Gun violence is the number one cause of death to children ages birth to age 19 years as reported by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and [Everytown for Gun Safety](#).

During the 2023 long session, by overriding Governor Cooper's veto, the NC General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 41](#) - Guarantee 2nd Amendment Freedom and Protections. This law allows people with concealed carry permits to carry handguns into places of worship that also serve as schools.

NASW-NC opposed this bill.

[House Bill 189](#) - Freedom to Carry NC; was introduced during last year's long session and is expected to be brought back up during the short session. With supermajorities in both the NC House and NC Senate, it would be expected to pass. The Freedom to Carry act would get rid of the state's concealed-carry rules for guns. If it becomes law then anyone who can legally possess a firearm can also carry it concealed, in public, without needing to pass the test that the state currently requires. It would also let people as

young as 18 carry concealed handguns, instead of the current cutoff at 21. In addition, this bill would allow state lawmakers and other elected officials to bring concealed weapons with them anywhere in the state — even places where guns are otherwise banned, like schools and the state legislature — if they're there in an official capacity.

NASW-NC opposes this bill.

You can read more about the potential impacts of HB 189 from the North Carolinians Against Gun Violence position: [Permitless Concealed Carry Issues and Concerns](#).

Our neighboring state, Tennessee, has responded to the tragedy of the Covenant School Shooting by passing a bill that would arm teachers in schools, without notifying parents or even other school staff. The only person who would know which teacher/s were armed with guns would be the school administrator/principal. This bill faced overwhelming opposition from Tennessee parents, teachers, and even students. NC Speaker Tim Moore responded to the two shootings at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2023 by saying he would consider legislation that would allow guns on campus. NASW-NC is anticipating similar legislation could be introduced during the 2024 short session.

As social workers, we will continue to advocate for Common Sense Gun Reform that protects the children, families, seniors, communities, and neighborhoods we live and work in every day. ●

Legislative Continued from Page 9

In 2013, North Carolina became the first state in the US to eliminate master's pay for teachers, which meant educators who acquired a master's degree would no longer be paid a higher salary for acquiring an advanced degree. Restoration of Master's Level Pay for School Social Workers has been one of NASW-NC top legislative issues for the past 11 years.

It also supports student mental and physical health with \$44.6 million for school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers. These funds provide school districts flexibility so that they can strategically hire school health personnel to best meet student needs.

Committing to North Carolina Through Public Schools

The Governor's budget includes an average 8.5% teacher raise plus a \$1,500 retention bonus for most teachers. It would lift starting teacher salaries from \$39,000 to more than \$47,500, the highest in the Southeast. It reinstates Master's Pay, increases salaries for school-based administrators and invests \$34.7 million to expand Read to Achieve to middle school students. It provides funding for 700 elementary school teaching assistants in grades K-3. The budget provides \$11 million to strengthen the pipeline of new teachers and creates opportunities for more North Carolinians to pursue careers in teaching by expanding Teaching Fellows program eligibility to more education schools and in more subject areas.

It makes investments in student success through \$217 million for crucial support programs for disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency.

Strengthening Child Care and Early Education for Working Families

On June 30th, federal COVID-19 relief money that funded worker pay increases at the state's childcare centers will run out. As a result, 29% of childcare centers say they won't be able to remain open if the General Assembly doesn't intervene.

The Governor's budget mitigates the fiscal cliff in child care funding and keeps child care centers open with \$200 million for Child Care Stabilization Grants and \$128.5 million for child care subsidies that will increase reimbursement rates for providers in rural and low-wealth communities.

Our nationally recognized NC Pre-K program is at risk because of persistent underfunding by the General Assembly. The Governor's budget shores up NC Pre-K by investing \$197 million to cover the full cost of care for NC Pre-K students and \$24.4 million to provide summer programs for students once they complete NC Pre-K and before they enter kindergarten. The budget also further reduces child care costs for North Carolina families by providing a refundable child and dependent care tax credit.

[You can read the Governor's Press Release here!](#)

[You can read the Governor's full budget here!](#)

Please sign up for [NASW-NC Advocacy Alerts](#) to keep up to date on developments this legislative session as well as receive action alerts on ways to take action. If I can be of any assistance to you, feel free to contact me at lzingraff.naswnc@socialworkers.org or call the NASW-NC office at 919-828-9650. ●

Bridging the Gap: Cultivating Cultural Sensitivity and Humility in Social Work Practice with Muslim Communities

By Huma Hasan, MSW
NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Committee

My inspiration for developing the webinar, "Serving Muslim Clients with Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Humility" was to educate social workers about Islam and Muslim practices. The inspiration stemmed from my experiences as an Equity and Inclusion and Advocacy and Policy intern for NASW-NC. While working on a project of updating existing webinars, I noticed a gap in the available resources for social workers. While there were resources addressing various marginalized populations in the US, none specifically offered guidance on cultural competence or knowledge on sensitivity when working with Muslim clients. This observation highlighted a blind spot within the social work community regarding Islamic faith, Muslims, and the prevalent issues of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.

According to research conducted by Pew Research Center, there are approximately 3.4 to 7 million Muslims living in the United States. Therefore, it is important for social workers to develop cultural competence and acquire a fundamental understanding of the Islamic faith, which represents about 2% of our national population. This will help in providing better services and empower social workers and their clients.

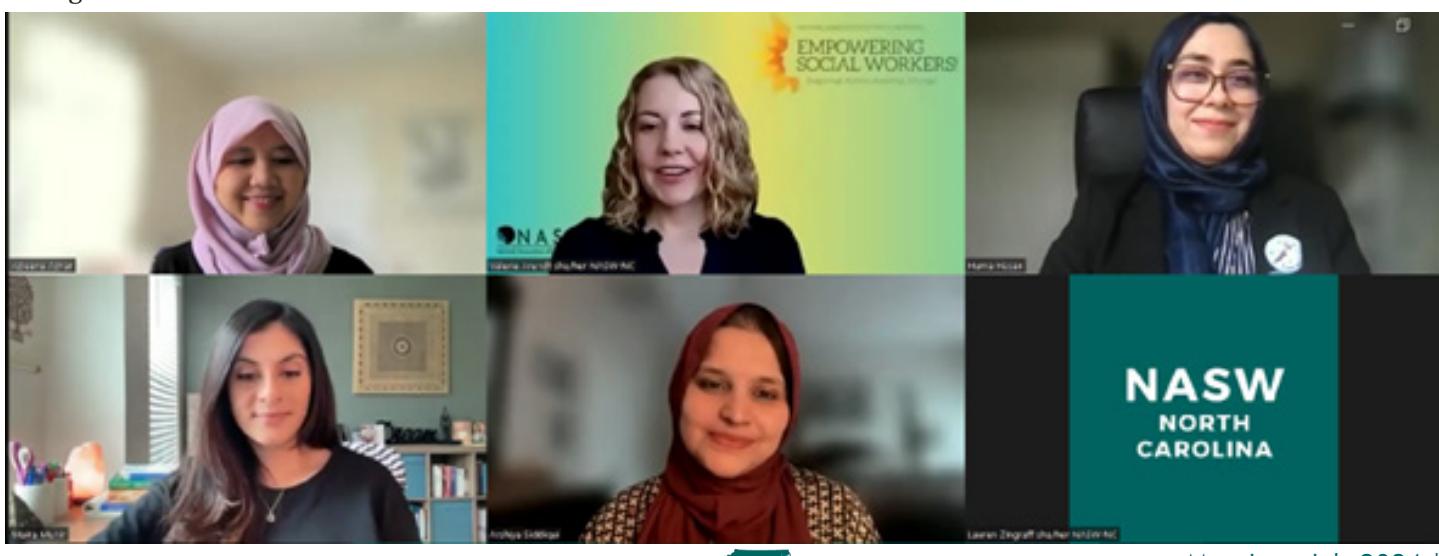
As a member of the Muslim community, I recognize the barriers hindering individuals from seeking mental health services within this community. These barriers include a lack of empathy, microaggressions, and a fundamental misunderstanding of cultural and religious beliefs of Muslims by social service providers. Muslim clients often feel disconnected from their service providers and experience judgment when expressing themselves. As a social work student, I understand the importance of adhering to our profession's Code of Ethics, which emphasizes the significance of cultural competence in providing effective services. Social workers should strive to offer culturally informed care, demonstrate cultural humility, and continuously educate themselves to enhance their practices. This inspired me to develop a resource aimed at bridging this gap, benefiting both service providers and their clients.

I designed the webinar format and collaborated with a team

of Muslim clinicians, each contributing their expertise and knowledge. Azleena Azhar, LCSW-A, brought her expertise as a trained chaplain and spirituality expert. Arshiya Siddiqui, LCSW, LCAS, shared her knowledge on microaggressions and Islamophobia. Maira Munir, LCSW, discussed Muslim mental health, while I offered my knowledge on Islamic faith. Together, we delved into a comprehensive exploration of Muslim culture and religion, covering topics such as holidays, practices, and terminology. Our webinar went beyond surface-level discussions to address critical issues like recognizing microaggressions, cultural biases, and stereotypes. Additionally, we shed light on mental health concerns within the Muslim community, including collective trauma, and offered insights into integrating faith-based practices and spirituality into therapeutic interventions. Furthermore, we raised awareness about existing challenges and barriers in accessing culturally sensitive care.

We received an overwhelmingly positive response and encouragement from around 350 social work faculty, students, clinicians, and other service providing professionals in attendance. They wondered "why it took so long to address this issue," and someone commented "what a timely initiative!" and "This [information] should be included in our social work curriculum." The survey conducted at the end of the webinar provided us with valuable insights into attendees' learning experiences and implications for cultural competence in social work practice. While many attendees felt empowered by the webinar, some expressed a desire for future exploration of specific topics covered.

Overall, the survey responses emphasize the importance of ongoing education and reflection to enhance cultural competence and provide effective support to diverse client populations. As a social worker I feel encouraged to offer resources and continued education webinars in future in the areas of interest including intersectionality in Islam, family dynamics, mental health stigma, religious trauma and collective grief, culturally competent interventions, diversity in Islam and global perspective. Future webinars can further enrich the cultural competence of social workers and enhance their ability to provide effective support to Muslim individuals and communities. ●



NC NASW PACE Update: NASW-NC's Political Action for Candidate Election Committee!

By Allison Stersic, MSW
NASW-NC PACE Committee Chair

Have you heard of the NASW-NC Political Action for Candidate Election (NC NASW PACE) committee yet? We are the political action committee of the NASW-NC Chapter. Our goal is to endorse candidates that uphold the values of NASW-NC, social workers across NC, and protect the populations our profession serves.

NC NASW PACE is comprised of a dedicated and passionate team of NASW members who:

- Make endorsements of candidates for state and local elections
- Make financial contributions to the campaigns we endorse
- Mobilize social workers to volunteer for candidates
- Engage in voter registration and Get out the Vote events
- Educate social workers about civic engagement and encourage participation

Why are elections so important to social work?

Elected officials are responsible for voting on the policies that directly affect the populations we serve. Policies can increase equity or further marginalize people; therefore, being informed and actively engaged with the election process is another way we serve our clients. Our vote matters, our advocacy matters, and as you may have heard, 2024 is an important election year!

I know politics can be overwhelming, frustrating, and exhausting; that is why NC NASW PACE prioritizes its endorsement process. All the candidates we endorse complete a comprehensive survey asking about their positions on important issues such as reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ rights, gun policy, affordable housing, climate change, and more. NC NASW PACE also reviews voting history (for any candidate who has previously held office), and any other efforts they have been involved in that indicates how they will likely vote on bills social workers care about. You can expect to find these endorsements later this summer on the [NC NASW PACE webpage](#) and we hope you consult this list when you are deciding who you will vote for November 5, 2024. [Bookmark our page!](#)

What is new for NC NASW PACE this year?

Beyond voting on November 5, 2024, (and making sure that others Get Out the Vote!), there are other ways you can make a difference in the election. NC NASW PACE provides financial endorsements for campaigns in races we deem as very competitive. Please consider entrusting NC NASW PACE with a donation to enhance our collective social worker voice in NC. Unfortunately, as we are all aware, money influences the outcomes of elections. If you have the means to donate, please consider NC NASW PACE.

New in 2024 - any social worker who lives or works in NC can donate to NC NASW PACE - you don't have to be a



member of NASW! This is a VERY BIG deal and creates a way for the NC NASW PACE committee to significantly increase our potential impact. Here are the new options for donating, for members and nonmembers. Please share this information with your network of social workers!

Options to Donate:

- Mail a check, a cashier's check, or money order, payable to **NC NASW PACE**, to P.O. Box 27205, Raleigh, NC 27611. **To ensure that only social workers who live or work in NC donate, and to stay in compliance with NC State Board of Elections rules for Political Action Committees- see the required information that must be included with your donation here.*
- Good news! You can donate when signing up or renewing your NASW membership. Not a member yet? [Join by clicking here!](#)
- Current members can also donate online via credit card to NASW National (these donations will be split between the national office and the NC Chapter). [Click here!](#)

Do you have time to volunteer?

NC NASW PACE is expanding and we are currently accepting applications for new members! Prospective volunteers are not expected to have political experience or deep political knowledge. Rather, you are expected to bring your dedication to serving North Carolinians and your willingness to learn and be involved.

This year, NC NASW PACE has also launched the PACE in Action subcommittee. This group will be focused on efforts such as organizing volunteers to support candidates' campaigns that we endorse, Get Out the Vote events, social media campaigns, educational workshops. Come join a dedicated and passionate group of social workers, and bring your ideas! The committee meets every 3rd Monday from 4:30pm – 5:30pm.

Interested in applying as a volunteer? [Click here!](#) (Only NASW members are eligible to join.)

Not sure if you can commit to attending PACE Committee meetings, but want to get involved? Fill out the [NASW-NC's volunteer form](#) to get connected to PACE Committee leadership and stay up-to-date on endorsements, events, and more!

If you have not signed up for NASW-NC advocacy alerts, you can [sign up here](#) to see updates and current relevant information for PACE and advocacy.

Please join us as we come together, as social workers and social justice advocates, to elect candidates who will protect our democracy and the rights of all North Carolinians! ●



We want to honor you!

NASW-NC wants to recognize social workers for the amazing work they're doing... nominate yourself or someone you know for Member of the Week!

www.naswnc.org/MemberoftheWeek

Unveiling Oppression: Exploring Realities Parallel to the Handmaid's Tale

By Rachel Mathew, MSW, LCSW
NASW-NC Board Member

Margaret Atwood's novel, "The Handmaid's Tale," proved to be a challenging read for me primarily because of its intense subject matter. I hesitated to watch the television adaptation, uncertain if I could endure the vivid depiction of the disturbing scenes that Atwood masterfully portrayed in her book. However, I eventually decided to give it a try.

Flawlessly made, brilliantly acted, and visually mesmerizing, *The Handmaid's Tale* draws the viewer in, wanting to learn more about each of its characters. It is also bone chilling, gut wrenching, and often times hard to stomach. But I consider it a significant television series that every adult should watch.

Gilead, the dystopian realm crafted by Margaret Atwood, regrettably mirrors realities not so distant from our own. Throughout history and across the globe, elements of its oppression have persisted, with women dehumanized and reduced to mere vessels for childbirth, subjected to torture and abandonment without hesitation. These atrocities persist even in today's ostensibly civilized societies. Certain scenes within the narrative, depicting themes of power dynamics, abuse, rape, and familial separation, hit uncomfortably close to home. The twisted interpretation of religious principles, manipulated to serve the ruling elite's interests in Gilead, showcases the stark hypocrisy underlying their rule.

Often while watching in the hushed stillness of the night with my family asleep, I found myself overcome with inconsolable sobs. It wasn't just the emotions stirred by the scenes unfolding before me, but the recollection of every woman I had encountered throughout my years as a social worker. Women and girls, who I had the privilege to counsel and support, who bore the scars of physical and emotional abuse inflicted by their partners, fathers, uncles and brothers; many who were cast out of their homes, considered worthless and disposable. I remembered the young girls who were haunted by fear and anxiety, afraid to sleep at night listening for their bedroom doors creak open in the dead of night, dreading the man who was partially responsible for creating them, slip under the covers beside them.

There were those who suffered for their love, deemed unacceptable by societal norms and religious dogma, and transgender individuals subjected to ridicule, discrimination and even violence for simply embracing themselves.

Yet, amidst the tears, I also found solace in the resilience and remarkable courage displayed by these women—not unlike the handmaids of Gilead. They were survivors who refused to surrender. Each day as the handmaids donned their crimson robes and white bonnets, obediently fulfilling their prescribed roles, they



demonstrated an unwavering determination to endure.

I have often been perplexed as to why discussions regarding intimate partner violence (IPV), even among the well-educated, often tend to gravitate towards questions like, "Why doesn't the victim just leave?" or "Shouldn't we consider both perspectives?" However, the crucial inquiry should focus on understanding why the perpetrator chooses to abuse. It is essential that perpetrators are held responsible for their actions rather than making excuses for their abusive behavior.

Today, women continue to battle for their reproductive rights and autonomy over their bodies. What was once upheld as the standard in this nation, *Roe v. Wade*, has been overturned, drastically altering the landscape of women's access to essential healthcare. This shift disproportionately affects women of color, exacerbating existing disparities. Across various states, we witness the introduction of stringent laws aimed at restricting women's access to reproductive healthcare, even in life-threatening situations. Pregnant women are denied care in Emergency Rooms out of fear among doctors of legal repercussions, regardless of the urgency of treatment. Arizona, regrettably, has regressed to archaic practices, as evidenced by its Supreme Court reinstating the 1864 abortion ban. Notably, this ban was championed by William Claude Jones, whose personal history is marred by troubling accounts of child marriage and abandonment, not just once, but over and over again.

Worldwide there has been a shift to the radical right, countries in all different time zones electing and appointing conservative right-wing leaders who are ready to dismantle the existing pillars of their constitutions, erode the fundamentals of democracy just to assume more power. Even in the era of the Me-Too movement, women are still being doubted and attacked for coming forward to share their stories.

Every day I work hard to instill values of fairness and justice in my children. It is crucial for me to impress upon them the significance of treating everyone equally, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or race. They must understand that no individual has the right to exert power on another to diminish their worth or accentuate their differences. As a social worker, this is my lifelong dedication.

June Osborne, the protagonist of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the myriad courageous women within its narrative, and the real-life individuals I have worked with for decades, have left an indelible mark in my mind. My fervent hope is that as a society we can collectively strive to build a more just and equitable society, step by step, where the oppressive reality of a regime like Gilead becomes an impossibility. ●

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NASW-NC Resume Review: bit.ly/naswncresume



NASW Legal Defense Fund Updates

The NASW Legal Defense Fund has updated several "Legal Issue" articles to reflect new laws and regulations pertinent to social work practice. Specifically, they have updated:

- [Responding to Subpoenas](#)
- [Duty to Report Neglect and Abuse of a Minor](#)
- [Obtaining Informed Consent to Treat Minors](#)
- [Duty to Warn](#)
- [Psychotherapy Notes](#)
- [Parental Access to Minors Treatment Records](#)

Additionally, they have published new Legal Issues on [Corporate Transparency Act](#), [Gender-Affirming Care](#), and [Navigating Artificial Intelligence & Client Privacy](#).

Amicus Briefs Participation

This year, so far, they've actively participated in three amicus briefs, each addressing critical issues that intersect with social work practice. Below are brief descriptions of each:

- NASW, the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, and several other mental health organizations filed an amicus brief in a Supreme Court case, City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Gloria Johnson, et al., arguing that addressing homelessness through criminal enforcement disproportionately impacts individuals with mental illness and advocating for scalable interventions to improve health outcomes and reduce costs.

- NASW & the American Psychological Association (APA) submitted a joint amicus brief to the Supreme Court arguing that people seeking abortions should not be denied access to mifepristone, a safe and effective abortion medication. Medication abortions account for more than half of the abortions in the United States, and restricting access to the drug would likely force many pregnant people to seek unsafe alternatives to end their unwanted pregnancies.

- NASW signed on to the National Women's Law Center amicus brief supporting survivors of harassment. The brief is about the pervasiveness of sex-based harassment in academia and the necessity for statements made in the context of the employers' investigations, to remain protected and not be the basis for a defamation lawsuit from the harasser.

Upcoming Webinar

The NASW Legal Defense Fund is excited to announce a CE webinar tentatively scheduled for June 5, 2024. This event will focus on Documentation and Client Records—a subject chosen based on the prevalent themes from our consultation calls. The webinar aims to delve into best practices, legal considerations, and strategies to enhance the quality and security of documentation and client records. Their presenter is Frances Schopik, a social worker and attorney in Seattle, Washington who is currently serving on the LDF board. She has an extensive history of advising social workers on this topic. As the date approaches, they will provide additional details, including registration information. •

More Photos From the Association Executives of North Carolina Kick-Off



Rachel Mathew, Karen McLeod Ray, and Representative Timothy Reeder



(L-R) NASW-NC Director of Advocacy Lauren Zingraff, NASW-NC PACE Committee Chair Allison Stersic, NASW-NC Board Member Rachel Mathew, NASW-NC Board President-Elect Karen McLeod Ray, NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Committee Member Huma Hasan, NASW-NC PACE Committee Member Jay Ratia, NASW-NC Executive Director Valerie Arendt



Valerie Arendt, Jay Ratia, Allison Stersic, NC DHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley, Rachel Mathew, Karen McLeod Ray, Lauren Zingraff

E and I Continued from Page 4

Nylia's volunteer work and field experience have further solidified her dedication to social work ethics and values working with diverse populations, including youth, families, groups, and organizations, showcasing both her versatility and passion for service and outreach.

ECU School of Social Work Director of Field Education LaTonya Gaskins says of Nylia, "Her service to the community and university is exemplary. In her role as President of ECU's Bachelor of Social Work Student Association, Nylia demonstrated exceptional leadership, steering the organization to make a significant impact through community service and philanthropy."

Amaria Rankins, UNC Wilmington BSW Student

Amaria Rankins is a BSW student at UNC Wilmington and is the current president of the Black Women's Association (BWA) and a mentor in the Black Excellence Project which has allowed her to spearhead initiatives to foster a sense of belonging and support among Black women on campus. Additionally, as a student representative on UNCW Psychology's Diversity, Equity,



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by social workers.**

and Inclusion (DEI) committee, Amaria advocates for her peers and collaborates with faculty and staff to promote diversity and inclusion initiatives campus wide.

Amaria's dedication extends beyond campus borders; she plans to establish a nonprofit organization focused on community outreach and resource advocacy in predominantly Black neighborhoods. This award recognition will provide support for Amaria as she continues her studies and pursues her mission of creating positive change in her community.

UNC Wilmington Associate Professor Dr. Tiffany Lane says of Amaria, "As one of few Black women students on campus, she has made a presence on campus as a leader who inspires community human agency among other women on campus. I admire her desire to engage incoming students and provide support to African American students and students from other racial and ethnic groups who are interested in social work."

More information about the NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Student Award and how to donate to this award can be found here: www.naswnc.org/EquityAward.

The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) is a membership organization that promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. ●

HB 303 Continued from Page 8

This bill goes against the neo-Republican ethos of limited intervention and the belief that small entities know what is best for their constituencies. Significantly, [HB 325 resulted](#) in an almost 20% loss of polling sites in North Carolina from 2014 to 2018.

Due to the forced closure of polling sites, some voters failed to participate in elections, while many others substituted the lack of access to polling sites by opting for early voting. One [study](#), examining North Carolina voting trends, shows that in response to reduced or relocated polling sites, voters shifted towards early voting. The researcher theorized that this shift is attributable to notification mailers informing residents of changes to polling places and encouraging them to vote early.

In a [February 2024 article](#), 'Moore said having so many days of early voting costs county elections boards a lot of money and taxes the candidates, including himself, who try to visit polling places to meet voters.'

It is clear that maintaining an open and accessible electoral process is essential for upholding democratic values and ensuring that all voices are heard. It is incumbent upon us to closely monitor developments related to House Bill 303 and to advocate for policies that promote greater inclusivity and participation in the democratic process.

In closing, let us remain vigilant and proactive in defending the integrity of our electoral system and in safeguarding the fundamental right to vote for all citizens of North Carolina. For assistance navigating the voting process [click here](#) (or [here](#) for Spanish-language instructions). ●



DEI Continued from Page 1

In June 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly overrode Governor Cooper's veto of [Senate Bill 364](#) Nondiscrimination & Dignity in State Work bill. This bill banned training programs that address racism and other bias in state government workplaces. It also banned all state agencies, including public universities, from asking employees or prospective hires to state their opinions or take any action regarding "matters of contemporary political debate or social action".

What does this mean for public universities in North Carolina?

The new policy would require that each institution certify by September 1, 2024 that it "fully complies with the University's commitment to institutional neutrality and nondiscrimination." That reporting deadline includes each school eliminating or updating current DEI positions. Some universities have already started removing offices, positions and staff. Appalachian State University [recently terminated the employment](#) of four leaders of a group for LGBTQ+ employees. Appalachian State denies it is taking any steps to reduce or eliminate DEI programs but [the university recently renamed](#) its LGBTQ+ Center's annual "Pride Fest" to "Spring Fest."

The repeal of the [current UNC System DEI policy](#), in place since 2019, would remove the UNC System Diversity and Inclusion Council, senior officer at the UNC System Office who serves as the DEI liaison to all campuses and a senior-level DEI officer at each constituent institution. This will also prevent the dissemination of DEI information to students and employees.

Students and faculty are angry about the lack of transparency or discussion about the repeal and worried about what will happen next. These worries include what might happen to [identity-based academic centers](#), DEI-based research and [internship programs](#) through the Chapel Hill DEI office.

What does this mean for social work at UNC System institutions?

There are 14 universities in the UNC System that have a social work program (13 BSW, 11 MSW and 2 PhD programs). All social work programs are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE mandates that all social work programs teach about and embody Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI).

The act of removing DEI will have impacts on social work programs. [CSWE accreditation](#) requires implicit and explicit curriculum which includes commitment to ADEI. Examples of implicit curriculum include student development (ex: retention, admission, advising), faculty participation in areas such as research, and committees which reflect commitments to ADEI. Explicit curriculum includes competency-based work such as course/curriculum design and field education. While it is unclear how the removal of DEI will impact social work's explicit and implicit curriculum, universities and colleges need support and solidarity from CSWE to navigate these changes.

Social work programs will also have to assess the impact of the DEI removal on their students and in the long term, our workforce. To build a diverse workforce, social work needs to recruit and retain diverse students. Further, how will we teach students how to demonstrate

the principles of ADEI in their work, without being able to model advocacy and anti-oppressive practice in social work programs? Social work faculty navigating their own professional values may consider pursuing other teaching opportunities in other private colleges or universities or work in agencies where DEI work is permitted.

There is a valid fear of retaliation by non-tenured faculty for speaking out about this policy repeal. Programs are being eliminated at a number of universities, and while social work doesn't seem to be a targeted educational discipline to be removed, it certainly isn't safe from the Board of Governor's ability to close programs given the profession's commitment to DEI and social justice.

Potential impact on social work profession

As a profession, social workers embrace the intrinsic role we have in combatting discrimination, oppression, racism, and social inequities while ensuring that all people from all communities have access to needed information, services, and resources.

The NASW Code of Ethics calls on all members of the social work profession to practice through an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens. This includes supporting activities, such as DEI programs, that promote sensitivity to and knowledge about exclusion and the disproportionality of discrimination when intersecting with diverse identities. However, if DEI is removed from the 14 public universities that teach social work in North Carolina, how can our profession learn about the core tenets of our professional ethics?

What should we do?

We stand in solidarity with those who are marginalized and silenced by these laws and policies and will continue to uphold our ethical obligation to teach social workers and social work students about ADEI, as mandated by our NASW Code of Ethics, our credentialing standards, and our moral obligation to challenge unjust laws and policies that harm communities and silence those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

The universities' administration should continue their commitment to supporting all students and faculty and provide a compassionate, high-quality college experience that is focused on student success. Students and faculty should be able to voice their concern for these changes but many cannot because of potential retaliation. It is up to social workers and North Carolinians to pressure the UNC Board of Governors and the North Carolina Legislature that this move is detrimental to diversity of thought and quality education.

Voting Matters!

This is another reason why voting is, and always will be, a social work issue. Voter oppression, gerrymandering and low voter turnout for the last decade has resulted in the significant imbalance of power in North Carolina. Those in power at the North Carolina General Assembly are making serious decisions to the detriment of our public education systems at the K-12 and collegiate level.

The North Carolina Legislative Short session started on April 24, 2024 and we will have to wait and see if the legislature introduces legislation to make this a permanent ban on DEI in the UNC System.

The General Election is on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. **Every one of us should be working hard to help North Carolinians get a photo ID, register to vote and vote during early voting which starts on October 17. ●**

*Thank you to these NASW-NC
Board Members at the end of their terms*



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We are grateful for their service to the social work profession

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