

National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter

2023 Legislative Priorities

The National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter (NASW-FL) is part of the world's largest organization of professional social workers and represents approximately 4,200 professional social workers in Florida.

Legislation Reform—NASW-FL considers its agenda based on the Florida Legislation each session along with alignment to our Code of Ethics and Social Work Speaks. The Chapter focuses on combating the injustices outlined in current and proposed Florida policies.

- **Anti-Racist Legislation**—Urge for legislation that addresses issues that impact people and families of color, concentrating on disparities in health care, education, and income. Support legislation that outlines a pathway that supports anti-racist practices for equitable outcomes.
- **Civic Engagement and Education**—Advocate for legislation that allows teaching historical truth and does not eliminate discussions of race, racism, slavery, gender identity or discrimination.
- **Voting Rights**—Protect the rights of returning citizens to have the right to vote without financial hardship. Support legislation that empowers Floridians to participate in the voting process by opposing voter suppression legislation.

Workforce—The Chapter recognizes the importance of the social work profession, workforce challenges, wages, and employment trends. With this focus, the Chapter concentrates on the following areas:

- Advocate for hiring social workers in schools, child welfare, and mental health services.
- Address alternatives for student loans and paid internships for social work students.
- Support legislation that provides higher reimbursement rates and wages for social workers.
- Revise the social work licensure laws to allow greater mobility and equality.
- Advocate for outcome transparency with ASWB and create alternative pathways to licensure that support an equitable representative workforce.

Health Care and Mental/Behavioral Health—Florida's current service supports a reactive response with a limited concentration on reducing poor health outcomes. The focus must be on expanding access and affordability to health and mental health services.

- Oppose any policies that restrict access to reproductive justice.
- Promote and advocate for Medicaid Expansion to ensure health care insurance.
- Advocate for the delivery of mental health services in schools.
- **Veterans and Military Families**—Expand mental health services and the seamless implementation of these services for veterans and their families.

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Marginalized Populations – The Chapter condemns any legislation that targets or threatens an individual or community of their rights, access to services, and overall well-being. Advocacy efforts will continue to support inclusivity and fulfillment of basic human needs.

- **LGBTQIA+**—Support the rights of transgender people in schools and the workplace and access to gender affirming healthcare. Advocate to ban conversion therapy.
- **Disability Rights**—Advocate to increase accessibility, independence, and access to needed support services, especially adequate health care. Support programs that empower persons with disabilities.

Children and Families—The Chapter is committed to support policies that promote the safety and well-being of children and families by encouraging resources that focus on prevention and using practices that support social work efforts.

- **Child Welfare**—Strengthen the clinical supervision of child welfare workers with hiring/contracting LCSWs in the DCF system. Provide resources to child welfare workers to have manageable caseload sizes.
- **Protection of Safety Net**—Advocate against reinstituting the work & recertification requirements for SNAP, TANF & Medicaid.

Criminal and Immigration Justice—The Chapter focuses on reforming the criminal justice and immigration policies and practices to ensure they operate fairly and equitably. Our commitment is to ensure these institutions demonstrate humanity and reduce the jailed, detained, and incarcerated population in Florida.

- **Policing and Social Work**—Advocate for reform of police culture, the incorporation of anti-bias training for police officer along with accountability for officers who violate the law. Advocate for programs that allow social workers to participate in the support of calls related to behavioral health and well-being.
- **Criminal Justice Reform**—Support policies that promote reasonable, equitable, criminal justice laws, juvenile diversion and sentencing guidelines. Advocate for treatment rather than incarceration for challenges related to mental health and substance use disorders.
- **Immigration Justice**—Advocate for policies that provide access and opportunity to the needs of our Immigrant communities so that they do not have to live in fear and are able to thrive.

NASW is a membership organization that promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its work and through its advocacy.

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