

Social Work Reinvestment Act

A message from Betsy Clark about the profession.

Social Work Reinvestment reintroduced. Take Action Today!

Background: I am pleased to announce that on February 3, 2009, Congressman Ed Towns (NY-10), our social work colleague, reintroduced the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act (H.R. 795) in the House of Representatives. You may remember from the 110th Congress that the act is designed to address challenges to the social work profession such as serious safety concerns, significant educational debt, and comparatively insufficient salaries, thereby helping to ensure that millions of our clients throughout the nation can continue to receive professional and quality care. This legislation will create the foundation for us to meet the ever-increasing demand for the services that we provide. We, as professional social workers, have the unique expertise and experience to help solve the social and economic difficulties that our nation is currently facing.

The act will establish a Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide a comprehensive analysis of current trends within the academic and professional social work communities. Specifically, the Commission is required to report to Congress on its long-term recommendations and strategies to maximize the ability of America's social workers to serve individuals, families, and communities with expertise and care.

The act will also establish demonstration programs to address relevant, "on the ground," realities experienced by the profession. The competitive grants programs will prioritize activities in the areas of workplace improvements, research, education and training, and community based programs of excellence. The programs will provide guidance on successful social work recruitment and retention efforts that can be replicated across the country.

Action Requested: Last year, we had a strong outpouring of grassroots mobilization through your more than 50,000 letters to members of Congress. They reported how important it was to hear from you on this issue and many became co-sponsors as a result of your actions. This year, I am asking you to again contact your member of Congress. If your member is already a cosponsor your letter will say thank you for cosponsoring H.R. 795; please work for its passage. If your member is not yet a cosponsor, your letter will ask him or her to become a cosponsor and work for passage of H.R. 795. Your action is a critical first step as we work diligently to influence and to enact policy that will strengthen and preserve the profession. Thank you for your support in this effort.