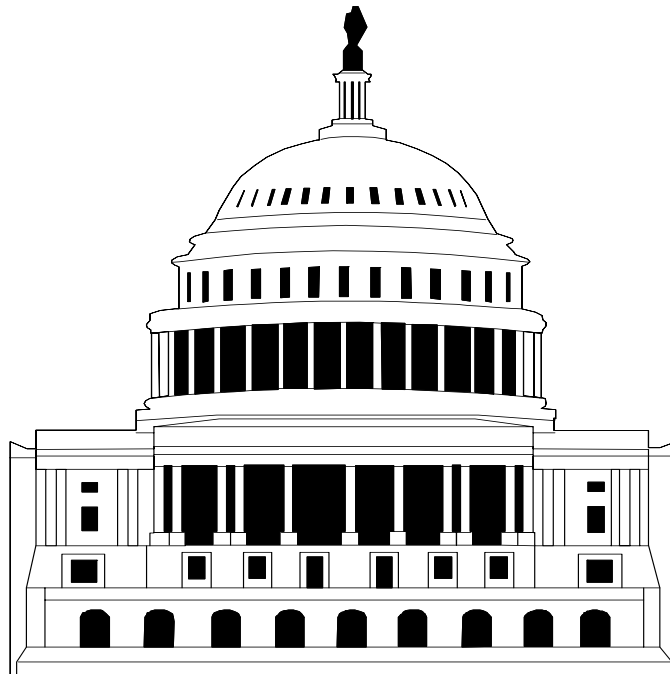




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
ILLINOIS CHAPTER

LOBBY DAY 2005  
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2005  
PRAIRIE CAPITOL CONVENTION CENTER  
SPRINGFIELD, IL

INFORMATIONAL PACKET



NASW Chapters present workshops at state conferences and lobby days that will educate members, other Social Workers, and Social Work students about electoral and legislative advocacy. Lobby Day was designed to provide its participants with an overview of how the Illinois chapter of the National Association of Social Workers advocates for the profession, for social justice through campaigns and elections and for the development and implementation of legislation that affects the field of Social Work. The Political Action Committee and the Legislative and Social Policy Committee of NASW-IL have put together a very informative Lobby Day for 2003 that will be a learning experience for all who are able to attend.

Lobby Day will provide Social Workers with an opportunity to meet and influence state legislators, observe the general assembly, network with other Social Workers and students from across the state and join in the celebration of the diversity of our statewide network of social workers from many settings.

It will be an exciting experience to see the halls of the Capitol Building filled with Social Workers as well as Social Work students carrying our message to legislators on both sides of the aisle. Social Workers from all over the state will converge on Springfield to advocate for NASW's top priorities:

- **Budget Restoration** – One of the critical issues going on in Illinois currently is the current budget deficit. We will be lobbying on alternative revenue sources.
- **Social Workers Medicaid Bill** – Allows LCSW's, LCPC's and licensed clinical psychologists to bill for Medicaid reimbursement.
- **Human Rights Bill** – Would make discrimination against a person because of their sexual orientation unlawful in hiring practices.
- **Family Care** – Expands KidCare to include families up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- **HB750** – Would achieve long-term school reform and increase the foundation level per pupil by implementing comprehensive tax reform.

Lobby Day will only be successful if we can impress the legislature with spirit and high participation. If you or someone you know has any questions about Lobby Day 2005, please contact:

Trinice L. Barron – (312) 236-8308 ext. 119  
Email: [TBarron@naswil.org](mailto:TBarron@naswil.org)

**Note:** It is important that you know who legislators are before you come down to Lobby Day. It helps to have that information so that you will know exactly who to lobby. To find out who your legislators are check the State of Illinois website at <http://www.legis.state.il.us> or visit the Project Vote Smart web site at <http://www.vote-smart.org/>

## **WHY NASW IS INVOLVED IN ELECTORAL & LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY**

The well-being of the Social Work profession and of the communities we serve are determined by policies. To develop or change policies, it is often necessary to elect legislators who share NASW's policy positions. Those positions are published in *Social Work Speaks*. In addition, it is critical that Social Workers are aware of any pending legislation that is going to have an impact on how we deliver services and how the populations we serve will access those services.

### **Lobby Day Objectives**

- To describe why Social Workers should be involved in legislative advocacy.
- To give Social Workers and Social Work students the necessary tools to be effective lobbyists.
- To demonstrate how Social Workers can gather information about pending legislation and how to lobby for the passing or the defeat of that legislation.

### **Why Social Workers Should Be Politically Active**

Social Workers must advocate in many arenas in order to achieve professional and social justice goals. These include reimbursement rates, requiring schools to hire Social Workers, social and economic supports, and civil rights.

There are many reasons why Social Workers should be politically active. Debbie Stabeneow, MSW, elected as US Senator from Michigan in 2000, said:

“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 things.”

Besides electing candidates who support NASW policy positions, there are a variety of additional reasons for Social Workers to be politically active.

- Shape the policies that affect our clients
- Provide a social work perspective. We understand how policies affect people.
- Represent the profession's interests.
- Work together on a common agenda.
- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics. Section 6.04 says that “Social workers should engage in social and political action.... Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.”

## **ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS**

### **Social Workers As Elected Officials**

Social workers are a profession of trained advocates with ideas about how to improve the lives of people and the condition of communities. They should be encouraged to run for office. Social workers understand social problems and how to build relationships, and bring a vital perspective to public decision-making.

Social workers across the country serve in a range of political institutions, from school boards to city and county offices and state legislatures. As of 2004, there are six social workers in the US House and Senate.

- Senator Barbara Mikulski (MD)

- Senator Debbie Stabenow (MI)
- Representative Susan Davis (CA, district 53)
- Representative Barbara Lee (CA, district 09)
- Representative Ciro Rodriguez (TX, district 29)
- Representative Ed Towns (NY, district 10)

In the Illinois General Assembly, Senator Christine Radogno, (R-24) and Representative Ken Dunkin (D-5) are the only Social Workers holding an elected position.

Why social workers make good political candidates:

Social workers

- are well educated.
- are articulate and experienced in public speaking.
- are comfortable at persuasion.
- are knowledgeable about their communities and clients.
- understand social problems and are committed to social justice.
- understand how policies affect individuals and communities.

Why social workers run for public office:

Social workers:

- are attracted to politics through an issue or cause.
- realize they are more capable than many officeholders.
- see the opportunity to make changes on a broader scale.
- want to provide leadership to improve their community.

**Social Workers as Paid Political Professionals**

Social workers can use their skills as paid campaign managers, volunteer coordinators, and political directors. These jobs can also translate into legislative jobs in which social workers can shape policy and help constituents by working with federal, state and local agencies. Social workers can transfer their involvement in campaigns into key appointments in state and local agencies. They can participate in discussions that can affect the practice of social work and pursuit of social justice.

**Social Workers as Campaign Volunteers**

Contact the campaign's volunteer coordinator, and if possible, go with several other social workers at the same time. Social workers can make a visual impact with campaigns by wearing NASW pins or t-shirts when volunteering. The volunteer coordinator could ask you to call voters, walk through neighborhoods to hang messages on door knobs, stuff mailings, answer the phone, or anything else that is needed.

**Social Workers as Lobbyists**

Social Workers working as lobbyists support favorable and oppose unfavorable legislation and represent the profession's positions in hearings and through letters and meetings with legislators. They also testify before legislative committees when necessary. They will work closely with chapter leadership to develop chapter's legislative policies, goals and positions, review and analyze proposed legislation to determine its impact on the profession (in conjunction with member specialists).



# LEGISLATIVE ELECTORAL ADVOCACY NETWORK

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## LOBBYING DO'S AND DON'TS

### DO

1. **Do** learn Members committee assignments and where their specialties lie. If possible, lobby them on upcoming subcommittee and committee issues.
2. **Do** present the need for what you are asking the legislator to do. Use data or actual cases (without names) that you know about.
3. **Do** relate to situations in your home district.
4. **Do** ask for the legislator's position on the issue and why.
5. **Do...** in the case of voting records, ask why they voted a particular way.
6. **Do** show openness to the knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them.
7. **Do** admit that you do not know. Offer to try to find out the answer and get follow-up to their office.
8. **Do** spend time with a legislator whose position is against yours. You can lessen the intensity of the opposition and perhaps change it.
9. **Do** spend time in developing a relationship with the legislator's staff.
10. **Do** thank the legislators for positions taken which you support.

### DON'T

1. **Don't** overload a visit with too many issues.
2. **Don't** confront, threaten, pressure, or brag.
3. **Don't** be argumentative. Speak with calmness and commitment so as not to put the legislator on the defensive.
4. **Don't** overstate the case. Legislators are very busy and you are apt to lose their attention if you are too wordy.
5. **Don't** expect legislators to be specialists. Their schedules and work loads tend to make them generalists.
6. **Don't** be put off by smokescreens or long winded answers. Bring the legislator back to the point.
7. **Don't** make promises you cannot deliver.
8. **Don't** be afraid to take a stand on the issues.
9. **Don't** be offended if a legislator is unable to meet and requests that you meet with their staff.
10. **Don't** shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite of your own.



## **LOBBYING GUIDELINES**

**The following guidelines were developed to help a citizen advocate to become an articulate, effective and respected spokesperson for their cause. The guidelines are: Preparation, Precision, Professionalism, Politeness, and Perseverance.**

**Be Prepared** – Plan ahead; do your homework so you know the issue you are going to lobby; try to personalize the issue; if possible prepare a fact sheet.

**Be Precise** – Get to the point and stick to it; lobby no more than one or two issues; make sure you hear what the legislator says, not what you want to hear; as a specific question about their position on the issue and get a specific answer.

**Be Professional** – Show up on time; be confident on your position; do not lecture; keep off-the-record comments confidential; do not take rejection personally; never break a promise.

**Be Polite** – Be cordial; be tolerant of the legislator’s viewpoint; never threaten with retaliation; do not badmouth other legislators or other groups.

**Perseverance** – Leave a fact sheet; follow up if necessary; keep pressure on undecided legislators; provide back-up materials; thank legislators who have helped you.

And remember, NASW is here to help. Call us if you have any questions.