

SOCIAL WORK REINVESTMENT ACT

FROM: JIM AKIN, ACSW—EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NASW-FL

The *Dorothy I. Height / Whitney Young Social Work Reinvestment Act* (HR 5447) is a significant initiative which, if enacted, will enable the nation's 600,000 professional social workers to better serve families and communities in need.

Named for two of the United States' greatest champions of social justice, the *Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act* would establish a Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide a comprehensive analysis of current trends within the professional and academic social work communities. Specifically, the Commission will develop long-term recommendations and strategies to maximize the ability of America's social workers to serve their clients with expertise and care.

Provisions of the Act include:

- ◆ A findings section to exhibit the state of the profession;
- ◆ A Blue Ribbon Panel to provide independent advice and counsel to Congress on policy issues associated with the recruitment, retention, research and reinvestment in the profession;
- ◆ A Demonstration Program to make grants available to support activities related to research, workplace improvements, education and training, and community based programs of excellence;
- ◆ The permanent establishment of March as "Social Work Awareness Month."

The volume and nature of our human, social service, and health care needs are changing. Whether it's the more than one million veterans returning from the Iraq war, the more than 500,000 children in our foster care system or the hundreds of thousands of families dealing with health, homelessness or addiction issues, professional, experienced social workers are in greater demand than ever.

At the same time, social worker salaries are significantly lower than those in comparable professions, social workers are retiring and leaving the profession in great numbers, and schools of social work are finding it more difficult to recruit young and dedicated people into the profession. The programs and initiatives of the *Dorothy I. Height / Whitney Young Social Work Reinvestment Act* will go a long way to ensure our supply of professional social workers can keep up with rising demand.

We are asking NASW-FL members to support HB 5447 by contacting your Congressional Representative. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Chapter Office at either (800) 352-6279 or naswfl@naswfl.org.

SOCIAL WORK SUCCESS STORIES

Part of the NASW-FL Reinvestment Plan is to create marketing pieces which show how professional social workers make a difference in the lives of Florida families. We are asking that you submit a short success story of how you made a difference in your client's life. Protect the confidentiality of the client, but please let us know. People need to hear about how professional social workers are making a difference. Please submit your story to Jim Akin at jim@naswfl.org, 1-800-352-6279, fax to (850) 561-6279 or mail to the Chapter Office at 1931 Dellwood Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32303.