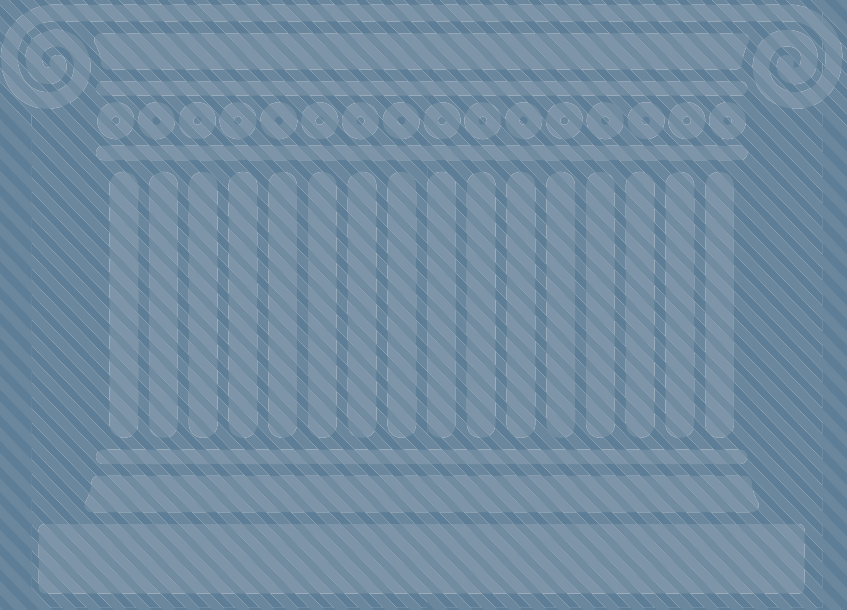


(116TH CONGRESS)

# SOCIAL WORKERS IN **CONGRESS**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) .....	3
Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ).....	4
Representative Karen Bass (D-CA).....	5
Representative Susan A. Davis (D-CA) .....	6
Representative Sylvia Garcia (D-TX).....	7
Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) .....	8

# INTRODUCTION

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the United States, with 55 Chapters in every state, and Washington DC, Guam, New York City, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Our members are practitioners, educators, researchers and policy makers who work with individuals, families and communities in numerous settings to address challenges such as child abuse and neglect, poverty, chronic illness, substance abuse, mental illness, and disaster recovery.

NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of social workers; to create and maintain standards for the social work profession; and to advance sound social policies that support the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Social workers possess a continuum of knowledge about human needs and behavior, services delivery, systems that affect individuals and groups and the effects of public policy. Social work has a rich history of policy and decision makers including Harry Hopkins, Frances Perkins, Whitney M. Young, Jr., and Dr. Dorothy I. Height. NASW is proud that the social work perspective continues to be represented in the halls of Congress.

<sup>1</sup> National Association of Social Workers, Policy Statements 2018–2020, *Social Work Speaks*, 11th Edition, 2018.



## U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW (MI)



U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow made history in 2000 when she became the first woman from Michigan elected to the United States Senate. Today she is one of our nation's most passionate and effective advocates for children and families. She is a proud member of the Congressional Social Work Caucus.

Senator Stabenow is a national leader in the effort to make sure all people have clean water and affordable, quality health care, including mental health and addiction services. She authored the mental health parity provisions in the Affordable Care Act, and in 2014, her Excellence in Mental Health Act was signed into law, marking one of the most significant steps forward in community mental health funding in decades.

Senator Stabenow is a longtime champion for School-Based Health Centers, and she is the author of the Hallways to Health Act to increase children's access to physical and behavioral health care during the school day.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Stabenow has been the leader for protecting and strengthening national food assistance programs and child nutrition initiatives, so that children have access to healthy breakfasts and lunches and summer food programs.

Senator Stabenow received her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Michigan State University.

## U.S. SENATOR KYRSTEN SINEMA (AZ)



Senator Kyrsten Sinema served three terms representing the 9th Congressional District of Arizona. She is the first woman Senator from the state of Arizona.

In Arizona where Senator Sinema grew up, strong schools and tight-knit communities meant opportunity for future generations. The hard-working middle class could get ahead, and government was there to help ensure that opportunity for all who were willing to work hard and play by the rules.

Senator Sinema became a social worker helping struggling families. She soon realized that the problems they came to her with – poverty, homelessness, job loss, abuse – were common to so many families, and that solving these problems meant thinking bigger than one family at a time. It required fighting for real change to rebuild an America that works for all Americans.

She was elected to the state legislature and worked to secure funding for Veterans, to provide business incentives for job creation and to fight back against attempts to gut basic health care for kids, cuts to services for the elderly and dramatic drops to school funding.

Senator Sinema has been lauded as someone capable of working with members of both parties, while never letting go of her progressive values and principles. Senator Sinema was the lead sponsor of the Social Worker Safety Act in the 115th Congress. Senator Sinema serves on the Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs; Commerce, Science, & Transportation; Homeland Security & Government Affairs; and the Veterans' Affairs Committees. She also serves on the Special Committee on Aging. She is a member of the Congressional Social Work Caucus.

# U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN KAREN BASS (CA-37)



Congresswoman Karen Bass is in her fifth term in the U.S. House of Representatives representing California's 37th Congressional District. Bass made history when the California Assembly elected her the 67th Speaker, catapulting her to be the first African American woman in U.S. history to serve in this powerful state legislative role.

Congresswoman Bass is solidifying leadership positions on two issues very close to her heart: reforming America's foster care system and strengthening the United States' relationship with Africa. In her first term, Congresswoman Bass created the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth intends to examine national standards of care in the child welfare system. Congresswoman Bass is Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and a member of the Congressional Social Work Caucus.

Congresswoman Bass serves on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs where she is Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations. As a member of the House Judiciary Committee and Chair of the Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security Subcommittee, Congresswoman Bass is also working to craft sound criminal justice reforms as well as protect intellectual property right infringements that threaten the economic health of the 37th District.

She grew up with three brothers in the Venice/Fairfax area of Los Angeles and is the only daughter of DeWitt and Wilhelmina Bass. She graduated from Hamilton High School, Cal State Dominguez Hills, and the University of Southern California's School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program. She earned her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California while serving in Congress.

# U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN SUSAN A. DAVIS (CA-53)



Congresswoman Susan A. Davis represents California's 53rd Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congresswoman Davis' interest in public affairs grew out of her experiences as a social worker, parent, youth mentor, and military spouse.

In Congress, the Congresswoman has earned a reputation as a bipartisan consensus builder achieving legislative successes in education, military families and Veterans support, and health care. She is proud to serve on the Armed Services Committee. She is also a member of the Education and Labor Committee and Chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Investment Subcommittee. She is a member of the Congressional Social Work Caucus.

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Congresswoman Davis grew up in Richmond, California. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in sociology. She then earned a Master's degree in social work from the University of North Carolina.



# U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN SYLVIA GARCIA (TX-29)



Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia was elected to Congress in 2018 as one of two first Latinas to be elected to Congress from Texas. Prior to coming to Congress, Garcia served as a State Senator in Texas.

The eighth of ten children, Garcia saw her parents struggle to raise her and her siblings. Garcia's parents taught her that with hard work and a good education she could accomplish anything. As a result of these lessons, Garcia dedicated herself to success at school. She earned a scholarship to Texas Woman's University in Denton, where she graduated with a degree in social work and political science. Garcia then received her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in Houston.

As a freshman Representative, Garcia is serving on the Financial Services and Judiciary Committees.

# U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE (CA-13)



Congresswoman Barbara Lee was first elected to Congress in 1998. She notes that as a social worker by profession, being an advocate for people in dealing with the federal bureaucracy has been a priority.

While she was in graduate school at UC Berkeley, Congresswoman Lee started a community mental health organization, called the Community Health Alliance for Neighborhood Growth and Change (Change, Inc.) because she saw a need in her community for mental health care, community education, and advocacy. It was through her social work experiences that lead her to be the social and racial justice advocate she is today.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Congresswoman Lee graduated from Mills College in Oakland and received her Master's in social work from the University of California in Berkeley. She began her political career as an intern in the office of her predecessor, the late-Congressman Ron Dellums, where she eventually became his Chief of Staff. Before being elected to Congress, she served in the California State Assembly from 1990-1996 and the California State Senate from 1996-1998.

Congresswoman Lee has consistently been a progressive voice in Congress, dedicated to social and economic justice, international peace, and civil and human rights. She is committed to eradicating poverty, fostering opportunity and protecting the most vulnerable in our society.

# REINVESTING IN SOCIAL WORK INVESTS IN A HEALTHY SOCIETY

## RECRUIT ↔ RETAIN ↔ RESEARCH REINVESTMENT

Professional social workers provide essential services to individuals across the lifespan and have long been the workforce to guide people to critical resources, counsel them on important life decisions, and help them reach their full potential. Social workers are society's safety net, and with our current economic challenges, this safety net has grown to include and protect a diverse group of people from all walks of life.

However, serious safety concerns, significant educational debt, and comparatively insufficient salaries are threatening the ability of our nation's social workers to provide these indispensable services.

The Social Work Reinvestment Initiative including the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act, is designed to address these challenges to the profession, thereby helping to ensure that millions of individuals and families throughout the nation can continue to receive competent care. This initiative will create the foundation for a professional workforce to meet the ever-increasing demand for the essential services that social workers provide. Professional social workers have the unique expertise and experience that will enable them to help solve the social and economic challenges that our nation is facing.



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