



January 15, 2021

Dear Rep./Senator,

On behalf of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the nearly 900 social work education programs and 700,000 social workers across the country, we write to extend our congratulations on your election to the 117th Congress. Every new Congress brings opportunities to address the challenges facing our nation. We applaud your service and call to your attention the critical role the social work profession and social work education play in promoting the mental health and well-being of all Americans. A primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty.

CSWE is a national association representing social work education in the U.S., and its members include nearly 900 accredited baccalaureate and master's degree social work programs. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation is the sole accrediting body for social work education in the United States. NASW represents over 110,000 professional social workers, who are the largest provider of mental, behavioral and social care services in the nation. Social workers provide essential services to over 10 million individuals daily in a broad range of settings and communities. Social workers also play crucial leadership roles in policy making. Indeed, five members of the 117th Congress are social workers and many other social workers are key staff on Capitol Hill. NASW also works to advance the profession's robust social justice agenda, because our profession recognizes that the key to individual well-being is the well-being of their community and society as a whole.

As the 117th Congress gets underway, we look forward to working with you to address the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. Social workers continue to work on the front lines, including in policy roles, to respond to these crises. We also look forward to working with you to advance our mental health and social justice priorities, and to support our workforce so we can meet society's growing needs. This includes legislation to promote social worker safety, reduce educational loan debt, increasing social worker reimbursement rates and increasing access to workforce training opportunities. For a copy of CSWE's policy principles for the new Congress and Administration, please visit www.cswe.org. NASW will soon provide to all Members of Congress its *2021 Blueprint of Federal Social Policy Priorities*.

Finally, we encourage you to join the Congressional Social Work Caucus, chaired by social worker Rep. Barbara Lee.

Many of the decisions you will make in the 117th Congress will impact our members and the communities, individuals, and families we serve. We welcome the opportunity to work together and be a resource for you and your staff in advancing shared goals. Please direct any questions to Otto Katt, Council on Social Work Education at otto@lewis-burke.com and Sarah Butts, MSW, Director of Public Policy, National Association of Social Workers, sbutts.nasw@socialworkers.org.

Sincerely,

Darla Spence Coffey
President and Chief Executive Officer, CSWE

Angelo McClain
Chief Executive Officer, NASW