

NEWS

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TOWNS BILL INVESTS IN COMMUNITIES, SUPPORTS SOCIAL WORKERS

Rep. Towns to introduce Social Work Reinvestment Act

WASHINGTON – Yesterday, U.S. Rep. Edolphus “Ed” Towns introduced the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young Social Work Reinvestment Act (H.R. 795) – a bill that seeks to increase support for America’s social workers by establishing a Social Work Reinvestment Commission to analyze and oversee the authorization of grants for education, training, and community based programs that support the work of social workers.

The bill is named after New York social worker Dorothy I. Height, who started her career as a caseworker in the New York City Welfare Department and who since has worked as a social worker and advocate for over seventy years. Named also after social worker Whitney M. Young, who worked in the profession until his death in 1971, the Social Work Reinvestment Act will ensure that America’s neediest communities have access to highly trained social workers.

“Social workers are one of our community’s greatest assets,” said Rep. Towns, who is a professionally trained social worker. “They help educate and train the poor, rehabilitate our sick, and counsel those experiencing mental distress. During a time when our nation is at war and suffering severe financial difficulties, people are more stressed and depressed, making the need for social workers greater now more than ever before.”

Though social workers provide critical services in the areas of child welfare, crisis intervention, family therapy, and assistance with housing, employment and education, the profession struggles with low salaries and safety concerns, which discourage college students from a career in social work. Universities and colleges like Columbia, Fordham, Hunter, New York University, and Yeshiva – where they provide training for social workers, many of whom remain in the greater NYC area – could be eligible for grants under the Social Work Reinvestment Act.

Rep. Towns concluded, “It is necessary to have trained social workers, providing quality assistance to those in need. When we invest in the social work profession, we are investing in the lives of people who use their services, and to me that is a worthy investment.”

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