

News From

U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski

Democrat from Maryland



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MIKULSKI, STABENOW, COLLEAGUES INTRODUCE SOCIAL WORK REINVESTMENT ACT

Bill addresses nationwide shortage of social workers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On World Social Work Day, the Senate’s only two social workers **Senators Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)** and **Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.)**, today introduced the *Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act* to address a nationwide shortage of social workers. **Senators Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii)** and **Gordon H. Smith (R-Ore.)** also joined in co-sponsoring the bill. **Congressman Ed Towns (D-N.Y.)** introduced a companion bill in the House of Representatives in February.

“I’m fighting to address the social worker shortage, not just as the Senator from Maryland who is standing up for her constituents, but also as a professionally trained social worker. I have provided these very services and realize what will happen if my constituents cannot get them,” said Senator Mikulski. “I will continue to fight for social workers and the people who rely on the critical work they provide to our nation’s most vulnerable citizens.”

“As a certified social worker, I know firsthand how critically important their skills are to communities,” said Senator Stabenow. “Without trained social workers, individuals in dire need of health, educational and family support services simply fall through the cracks unserved. This legislation brings much needed funding to stem this shortage of social workers and the vital services which they provide.”

The nation is facing unprecedented levels of social service and health care needs, while at the same time facing a shortage of social workers to address them. The *Social Work Reinvestment Act* will review current social workforce shortage challenges and determine how it will affect the communities social workers serve. The bill makes investments in the social work profession by:

- **Establishing grant programs** to address workplace improvements, research, education and training, and community-based programs of excellence.
- **Creating a commission to study services provided by social workers**, recruitment, retention and compensation, safety, and state-level licensing reciprocity.
- **Opening a National Coordination Center** to work with education, advocacy and research institutions, as well as gather and distribute information on social work research.
- **Urging the Senate to recognize March as Social Work Awareness Month.**
- **Creating a media campaign promoting social work.**