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## **U.S. Senators Barbara Mikulski and Debbie Stabenow introduce S. 2858, the Social Work Reinvestment Act, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of World Social Work Day**

WASHINGTON—In concert with a global celebration of the social work profession, two U.S. Senators, who are also trained social workers, have introduced legislation that will help the nation's 600,000 professional social workers better serve families and communities in need. **Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD)** and **Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)** today introduced S. 2858—the *Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act*—to address a nationwide shortage of social workers.

Additional original co-sponsors of the Senate bill include **Senators Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI)** and **Gordon H. Smith (R-OR)**. **Congressman Ed Towns (D-NY)** introduced a companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives in February, which now has more than 45 co-sponsors.

Both Senate and House bills seek to create a Social Work Reinvestment Commission to study policy issues associated with recruitment, retention, research and reinvestment in the profession of social work. Specifically, the Commission will study how issues such as fair market compensation, educational debt, labor trends, knowledge development, workplace safety, and state-level licensure have impacted the social work workforce.

In addition, the bill's proposed demonstration programs would fund competitive grants in the areas of workplace improvements; research, education and training; and community-based programs of excellence. These grants will support efforts underway within the private and public sectors, in the post-doctoral research community, at institutions of higher learning, and within community-based organizations. For more information, please visit [www.SocialWorkReinvestment.org](http://www.SocialWorkReinvestment.org)

"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.”

Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, ACSW, executive director of the National Association of Social Workers, said, “We are honored that two of the most distinguished members of the U.S. Senate are providing leadership for this campaign. Investments were once made to educate and train the social work workforce. In recent decades, though, such support has been limited, and the profession has found it increasingly difficult to recruit new social workers and to retain experienced social workers. America’s professional social workers need greater support to continue providing millions of struggling individuals and families with valuable mental health, social, and psychosocial services.”

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