



THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
 SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
 THE NANCY A. HUMPHREYS INSTITUTE
 FOR
 POLITICAL SOCIAL WORK



2008 Legislative Scoop Sheet

Volume 10. Issue 6 ~ April 21, 2008

Rebecca Williams, Editor

From the Editor's Desk ~ by Rebecca Williams

The 2008 legislative session of the Connecticut General Assembly is drawing to a close. However, this is no time for advocates to become complacent. All bills are in danger of not passing until they have been voted on favorably by both the House and the Senate, and signed by Governor Rell. The last few weeks of session are a flurry of activity as both houses hold session late into the night and on the weekend, and bills that were thought relatively safe could be in jeopardy once again.

This is a critical time for advocates to make their voices heard. As bills are moving to the Floor of both the House and the Senate for full body votes, your legislators need to know where you stand on these issues. This is your chance to hold your legislators accountable and to help enact real change for Connecticut residents!

As this is our last issue of the session, I would like to thank all of the LSS contributors for a job well done in keeping the SSW Community informed on important issues for social work practice!

CT-Teach Against Genocide(TAG) ~ by Danielle Millard

Calling all social workers: take an active role in your political system! We need you to **write to your state Representative and Senator**. Please ask them to co-sponsor **HB 5595**. This bill requires that the State Board of Education make available to local and regional Boards of Education materials concerning genocide. The bill has been **passed** out of the **Education and Appropriations committees** and will soon come to the floor for a vote. Urge your representatives to **co-sponsor** the bill before it comes to floor. Also ask that they vote in favor of the bill when it hits their floor.

In addition, let them know for this bill to be truly effective the amount appropriated needs to **increase by \$25,000** making the total amount appropriated for the bill \$50,000.

We have found that the officials who have been asked by their constituents to support the bill have become co-sponsors. Please take a moment to write or call your state representative and senator. This is your chance to make a difference in the lives of students around the state!

Anti-Discrimination Legislation~ by Sally Tamarkin

HB 5723, An Act Concerning Discrimination, has a **file number** and will hopefully be voted on by the House soon. **Now is the time to get in touch with your representatives** and tell them to support equality in gender identity and gender expression for all CT residents!

To recap the legislative session for HB 5723: We had a fantastic **lobby day** and **educational forum**, where almost **100 people** showed up to learn about discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming people and to lobby their legislators accordingly. Similarly, the bill's **public hearing** drew **people from all walks of life** to testify on behalf of this important legislation.

If you would like to get involved or would like any other information on this bill or what efforts might entail should the bill not pass, please contact jerimarie@transadvocacy.com. **Thank you** to everyone who has supported this bill and an end to discrimination against our transgender and gender non-conforming brothers and sisters in our state.

ATTENTION:

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women is holding a press conference Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at

10 AM in LOB Room 1B with Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro regarding pay equity for women.

Come show your support for

=PAY!

SAFE Program~ by Jillian Gilchrest

SB 243, An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program was voted **out** of the **Judiciary Committee** and sent to the Floor of the House. The bill has now been **referred to the Appropriations Committee** where it will need to receive a yes vote to be sent back to the floor of the House. Advocates hope that the bill is voted on by both the House and Senate by the **May 7th deadline**.

If you would like to support this legislation, please **contact your legislators** in the Appropriations Committee, and ask them to **vote the bill to the Floor of the House**.

Armenian Flag Raising at the State Capitol:

On the South grounds of the Capitol on Thursday, **April 24, 2008**, at 11 AM.

The 93rd Annual Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide will be held on Saturday, **April 26, 2008**, at 11 AM in the House Chamber.

Universal Health Care ~ by Kim Junior

HB 5617, An Act Delaying Implementation of and Making Revisions To the Charter Oak Health Plan, **passed** favorably out of **Appropriations** on 3/28/08 and went to the House Floor. On 4/17 this bill was put on the House Calendar as #396; file #671. This bill makes two important revisions to the Governor's bill of last year: (1) It adds mental health and substance abuse parity that Governor Rell left out of the plan, and (2) it ensures patients the right to an external appeals process.

HB 5618, An Act Concerning Revisions to The Husky Plan, was **referred to the Committee on Insurance and Real Estate** by the House on 4/16/08. If this bill gets out of Committee and is then passed by the House it will: (1) Restore continuous eligibility in the HUSKY Plan, Part A and Part B; (2) Delay contracting with managed care plan providers for the HUSKY Plan, Part A and Part B to July 1, 2009; (3) Eliminate cost-sharing under the HUSKY Plan, Part B; and (4) Eliminate the requirement that HUSKY Plan, Part A beneficiaries enroll in any available employer-sponsored health insurance policy if proven to be cost effective by the Commissioner of Social Services.

HB 5536, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership, was sent to the **Insurance and Real Estate committee** on 4/11/08. If this bill passes out of the committee and then is passed by the House it will allow municipalities, small businesses and non-profits to purchase the same insurance as state employees. This bill was initiated by **Representative Chris Donovan, MSW, House Majority Leader, and NASW-CT member**. This bill will provide cost-savings to municipalities, small businesses, and non-profits, while at the same time providing better health insurance. Voluntary programming leaves the choice in the hands of municipalities, small businesses, or non-profits.

Affordable/Supportive Housing ~ by Beth Panilaitis

There was **NO new funding** for permanent supportive housing included in the budget that was reported out of the **Appropriations Committee on March 26**.

The Reaching Home Campaign encourages supporters to contact their legislators to let them know that there was no new funding included in the budget and that without this funding it will be extremely difficult to help individuals and families who are living on the streets or in shelters find a home. **Now is the time** to urge your legislators to share this message with their legislative leaders and ask them to support new funding for supportive housing in 2008.

Supportive housing is permanent, independent and affordable housing combined with available on-site or visiting case management support and employment services.

Domestic Violence Shelters ~ by Melissa Sokolik

For those of you who are following the 24/7 Domestic Violence Shelter Coverage bill, (**HB 5622** - An Act Concerning Expansion of Shelter Services for Victims of Household Abuse and an Appropriation for Legal Services Programs for Indigent Persons), it has officially died after not being voted out of the Appropriations Committee by the April 1st deadline. Bill sponsors and supporters of HB 5622 will **attempt to have the designated monetary amount included** in the 2008-2009 budget.

There is still time to **contact the Senators and Representatives in your district** and urge them to support the expansion of staff service to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at domestic violence shelters to serve at-risk women and children in the state of Connecticut.

Child Welfare ~ by Jillian Prentiss

S.B. 27 has reached the Senate Floor and has a **file number, 640**. Section 23 appropriates the extra \$11,000,000 necessary to expand the Connecticut Juvenile Training Center (CJTS) and Riverview. If the bill passes the Senate and then the House, with section 23 un-amended, then these two agencies will be expanded to accommodate the influx of 16 and 17 year olds that will no longer be placed in adult prisons, as mandated by the Raise the Age legislation.

H.B. 5131, an omnibus bill that contained all of DCF's legislative proposals, **died** in the judiciary committee. The department is working hard to **add the proposals as amendments** to other bills. These proposals update and revise the DCF's confidentiality statues, allow DCF to run criminal background checks through the FBI for emergency placements, and make minor revisions to the Safe Haven law. A compromise has been made with the probate court, and DCF is no longer seeking statutory authority to transfer cases out of probate courts.

Healthy Teens ~ by Erin Smith

Good news! The Healthy Teens Act has been **voted successfully out** of both the **Education and Appropriations Committees** with **\$500,000** set aside in the state budget for it. We still have work to do though, and with the legislative session ending in a few weeks (**May 7th**) it is imperative that you **tell your legislators** that you **support HB 5591**, and they should too.

Also, join the Healthy Teens Coalition next Wednesday, **April 23rd**, from **10am-2pm** for our **Healthy Teens lobby day** in collaboration with **AIDS Awareness Day** at the Capitol sponsored by the **AIDS LIFE Campaign**. If you can't make it to the lobby day, then join us in a virtual lobby day by calling or emailing your legislator on April 23rd. Any way you can, show your support of the Healthy Teens Act!



Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work

University of Connecticut School of Social Work
1798 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117
Phone: (860) 570-9262 Fax: (860) 570-9133
E-mail: politicalinstitute@uconn.edu
Web: <http://www.politicalinstitute.uconn.edu>