

NASW-NYS Political Post

April 11, 2008

Karin Moran, MSW

Jeremy Darman, MSW, MA

A Few More Day's Late but Worth the Wait - The halls of the Capitol that have been consistently bustling with legislators and budget wranglers for 12-16 hours a day over the last several weeks have finally been abandoned. As we pen this very article, the ink is drying on \$121.7 billion dollars worth of budget bills that are being delivered to the Governor and your Policy Staff are sipping champagne on separate but equally sandy beaches, well, that last part is a figment of my imagination, but a girl can dream! As we reported last week, "Social workers yielded a substantial victory when the Health and Mental Hygiene budget included reimbursement to social workers providing psychotherapy services to persons under 19 years old and pregnant women of any age in Article 28 clinics" but the new news is that we were also successful in securing the first year of funding (\$250,000) for our three year Veterans' Mental Health Training Initiative! We could not have done this alone, and would like to extend our thanks to a number of legislators and their staff who helped push this effort across the finish line in a very difficult fiscal climate. Please join us in thanking the following legislators (listed alphabetically) Assembly members Ron Canestrari, Joseph Lentol, and Peter Rivera. Senators Vincent Leibell, Thomas Libous, Charles Fuschillo, Marty Golden, and Thomas Morahan. If you reside in any of their districts, please take a moment to send them a note of thanks

In other Budget News - The legislature also appropriated \$300,000 for Health Care Enhancements for direct care staff workers in mental health programs and \$45 million for the NYS Affordable Housing Corporation, a subsidiary of HFA which creates homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income families by providing grants to governmental, not-for-profit and charitable organizations to help with the construction and renovation costs, however, State Supreme Court justices did not receive a pay hike and as a result, Chief Judge Judith Kay has announced she'll be suing the state on behalf of her colleagues.

Campaign Chatter - Senators Clinton and Obama continue to battle it out over Pennsylvania as the delegate rich primary approaches on the 22nd of April. While speaking at a fundraiser in San Francisco earlier in the week, Senator Obama said his real life experience trumps Senator Clinton's foreign policy experience, Senator Clinton told a crowd she's the only candidate who will end the war in Iraq while Senator John McCain refused to rule out future preemptive war's with other countries.