

NASW-NYS Political Post

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NASW-NYS Leadership Lobby Day - On Tuesday, April 15, 2008, members of the NASW-NYS Board of Directors, Advocacy & Government Relations Committee, and Political Action Committee convened for the first annual *Leadership Lobby Day*. Members met with NASW staff at the Chapter office in Albany for a delicious breakfast, over which we engaged in legislative briefings, Q & A, and, true to social work pedagogy...role-play! After breakfast, members and staff marched the two blocks to the Legislative Office Building to lobby their legislators. We lobbied on S.6818/A.10078, a bill to include PTSD in Timothy's Law; A.5112, a bill to include licensed social workers as workers' compensation reimbursable providers; and S.6045-A, the *Reproductive Health and Privacy Protection Act*. According to our lobbying reporting sheets, members' legislative visits went very well overall, and many New York State legislators were pleased to see informed constituents in their offices (particularly those bearing candy), representing a profession that is gaining recognition and prestige in New York each day. Thank you members, for making this day a hit! Also, thank you to all staff, and interns John Attanas and Jessica Evans for helping all day long.

TLC Press Kickoff - Also this Tuesday, before making their legislative visits, NASW members joined the Timothy's Law Campaign for a press conference in the LOB to announce support for S.6818/A.10078, a bill to include posttraumatic stress disorder in NY State's parity law. With respective Senate and Assembly sponsors Thomas Morahan and Peter Rivera standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the advocates, TLC co-chair Glenn Liebman discussed the positive effects this bill can have by helping "returning troops...victims of rape, child abuse, and other violent acts." Assembly sponsor, Peter Rivera pointed out that many returning troops with PTSD "go to their local hospitals...and the burden falls on their local hospitals," while Senator Morahan called on the advocacy community to mobilize around this bill(that's all of us!): "We need all the advocacy we can get...we need advocacy, we need publicity [to get this bill passed]." In another proud moment for the profession, Mr. Liebman, CEO of MHANYS took the special opportunity to recognize NASW-NYS for its central role in this issue and in helping organize the event. Harvey Rosenthal, Kim Eisen, and Matt Canuteson of NYAPRS also deserve great credit for their skillful PR and media-handling and for this great success. Follow-up lobbying by TLC with senior legislative staff made all our voices heard.

The Budget...it's done...right? - As economic forecasts continue to darken, with GE's bell-weather declines, and the cost of fuel being one of the only (and spurious) indicators of increased national economic growth, New York State policymakers continue to warn of the tenability of spending as currently marked in the 2008-9 FY budget bills that the Legislature passed over the past weeks. While it is not expected that Governor Paterson will engage in the usual slew of line item vetoes in this budget, there is some possibility that the budget will be revisited in the summer in order to adjust for an even gloomier fiscal future. Portentously, the final FY 2007-8 budget numbers recently released by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli show that New York State took in \$4.1 billion less in revenues than expected.

A Well Deserved Break - Legislators headed home this Wednesday, not to return until Tuesday April 29th, in observation of the Passover holiday. After an arduous and frustrating budget process, it seems that many in the policy world are catching up on lost sleep and enjoying the spring weather. The Capitol Deli was empty on Thursday morning, with only a single legislator in presence, enjoying a casual cup of coffee in "civilian clothes" (i.e., not wearing a suit), and many of our advocate colleagues regrouping back at their offices in the shadows of the Capitol; this, all to prepare for round two: Let's get some bills passed!