

NASW-NYS Political Post

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Watch Your Wallets Folks - Several media sources are reporting on the Assembly's plan to pass a budget bill next week that includes a "\$1.5 billion income tax surcharge on New Yorkers who make more than \$1 million a year." The initiative appears to have little traction in the Senate though, as Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno (R-Rensselaer), told reporters "We're not gonna do it," we're focused on cutting property taxes." The Governor sang the same tune later in the week when he told reporters he is opposed to raising personal income taxes. However, both houses are said to be considering a \$1.50 per pack tax increase on cigarettes. Now, aren't you glad you're not a smoking millionaire!

Members in Political News - At a press conference in Rochester this week, Genesee Valley Division representative, Lenora Colaruotolo (CNLI committee chair) announced NASW-NYS's support of the governor's budget initiative to provide Medicaid reimbursement for licensed clinical social workers in Article 28 clinics. If enacted, the amendment will allow School Based Health Centers and other Article 28 settings to provide greater access to mental health services for children, adolescents, and pregnant women by reimbursing for psychotherapy services provided by LCSWs. Currently, only Federally Qualified Health Centers can be reimbursed for these services, thus excluding important populations who access mental health care through School Based Health Centers. During the press conference, Lenora stood with Commissioner of Health, Richard F. Daines, M.D. and other statewide representatives for medical and behavioral health reform to explain the value of preventive mental health care and the critical role that the social work profession plays in the mental health of children and adolescents in New York State. We thank Lenora for being a strong social work advocate and representing the profession at such a critical juncture. Stay tuned for more Article 28 news as the budget is negotiated with the Legislature.

Let there be Sun! - Attorney General Andrew Cuomo enhanced the State's Project Sunlight website (a database that currently includes campaign financing reports, lobbyist information and information on proposed legislation) to include a number of new options including a more user friendly section on campaign contributions. The website address is... www.sunlightny.org

On the National Front - Mike Huckabee dropped his bid for the White House earlier this week, current President, George W. Bush endorsed Senator McCain, Senator Hillary Clinton regained a bit of momentum by winning primaries in Texas, Ohio and Rhode Island, while Senator Obama took Vermont leading many to speculate about the role Super Delegates may ultimately play in the Democratic nomination. Also in the mix - Howard Dean is calling for a redo in Florida and Michigan.