

NASW-NYS Political Post - Early Edition

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After a brief lull in business here in Albany, the legislative session is back to full-tilt, with daily protests, marching, lobby days, and outdoor people-watching lunches on the Capitol lawn. NASW-NYS policy staff have dusted off our suits, resoled our shoes, and hit the halls in pursuit of more wins for the Chapter members. From this week until the end of June, the Legislature will be in session every week, upping their workload to 4 session days a week in Albany come June 2nd. As you know, we are in hot on the trail of an amendment to Timothy's Law to include PTSD; going after reimbursement of social workers under workers' compensation; and teaming up with other advocates to raise awareness on the reproductive rights bill.

Additional \$1 Million for Social Work Loan Forgiveness - Due to great persistence by the New York City Chapter, 1199/SEIU, and the NY State Chapter, the Senate Democratic Conference provided an additional \$1 million for the New York State Social Work Student Loan Forgiveness Program, bringing it up to a total of \$2 million per year. The funding came in the form of a member item from the Conference, and was not secured until after the state budget was concluded - thanks for the hard work everyone! Particular thanks go out to Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith, and Senators Diane Savino and John Sampson. This enhancement will double the number of applicants eligible to receive loan forgiveness each year, bringing it up to approximately 380 licensed social workers in "high need" areas. The application period for loan forgiveness is closed for this year, and new applications will become available in January 2009. NASW-NYS will continue to work with the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) which administers the program, but currently limits it to only 28 counties in New York State. We would like to see greater availability of funding for social workers in high need areas, but who do not work within one of the designated counties. For more information on the loan forgiveness program, visit: [http://hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/4/NYS Licensed Social Worker Loan Forgiveness Program](http://hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/4/NYS_Licensed_Social_Worker_Loan_Forgiveness_Program)

New York State Senate Votes to Suspend Gas Tax - After protracted debate, the Senate voted 46 to 15 to suspend New York State's gas tax from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The Speaker of the Assembly and the governor's office have already stated opposition to this measure, so there is little to no chance for enactment of this measure.

National Election News - This week, Barack Obama won the North Carolina primary, while Clinton received the majority of Indiana's Democratic delegates. Clinton superdelegates are now flipping to Obama, with increasing pressure for Senator Clinton to step down.