

PACE Fact Sheet for Members and Students

How is NASW involved in politics?

- NASW (the association) influences current officeholders by lobbying for and against specific legislation.
- NASW members lobby state and federal legislators by mail, fax, e-mail, and phone to advocate for legislation that affects social workers and the communities we serve.
- The political action arm of the association (PACE—Political Action for Candidate Election) influences who is elected to office and who has the power to make policy by endorsing and contributing to candidates, and by mobilizing NASW members to become involved in electoral politics.

Why is political action important?

- To gain better services for the clients and communities we serve, and to improve the well-being of the social work profession, it is necessary to elect legislators who share NASW's policy concerns.
- To make a greater impact working together for common goals.
- To include social work voices in policy-making. Social workers are trained communicators with concrete ideas about how to empower communities and should run for office and offer their professional expertise to campaigns.
- The NASW Code of Ethics says that "Social workers should engage in social and political action.... Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice" (p. 27).

Which members of Congress are social workers?

Currently there are six social workers in the U.S. House and Senate. Senators Barbara Mikulski (MD) and Debbie Stabenow (MI), and Representatives Susan Davis (CA-49), Barbara Lee (CA-9), Ciro Rodriguez (TX-28), and Ed Towns (NY-10). There are more than 200 social workers elected at the state and local level.

What is PACE?

PACE is the political action committee of NASW, dedicated to advancing social workers' public policy goals in campaigns and elections. PACE endorses and contributes to candidates who support NASW policy issues, and mobilizes social workers to vote for PACE-endorsed candidates.

PACE is a multiparty, federally registered political action committee established to support candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. Presidency. The national unit of PACE endorses candidates for federal offices and implements program development and training for political action throughout the association. Chapter PACE units endorse state and local candidates and collaborate with the national unit on federal elections.

Where do PACE funds come from?

PACE funds come from voluntary member contributions. Each year on the membership renewal form members are asked to contribute \$10 to PACE. Half of members' contributions goes to national PACE for federal candidates, and half goes to the chapter PACE for state and local candidates. Members also can make contributions at any time of the year directly to national or chapter PACE.

Who can give to PACE?

PACE can receive contributions from only current NASW members; therefore, new members in the process of joining NASW cannot contribute because technically they are not yet members.

Why should I give to PACE?

Every dollar that PACE can invest in key campaigns, and in our network of get-out-the-vote organizers, will pay meaningful dividends by strengthening NASW's presence and influence on Capitol Hill. PACE is heavily involved in making sure that social workers have an effect on congressional races and that each election represents a positive outcome for NASW's policy agenda. The goal is to make it easier for us to do our work, practice our profession, and make a positive difference in society.

How are endorsements made?

The PACE Board of Trustees makes endorsements after reviewing staff research and recommendations. Staff consults with the respective chapters and compiles information about the candidate's viability and support for key issues of concern to the social work community. Candidates who are social workers, women, or people of color are given special consideration.

What can social workers do to get-out-the-vote?

- Work on campaigns
- Call other social workers to encourage them to vote
- Post yard signs
- Work to get-out-the-vote on election day
- Contribute to the national and chapter PACE financially.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

Katherine Levy, Senior Political Affairs Associate
National Association of Social Workers
750 First Street, NE, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: 800/638-8799, ext. 418
Fax: 202/336-8311
E-mail: klevy@naswdc.org