



**THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
THE NANCY A. HUMPHREYS INSTITUTE  
FOR  
POLITICAL SOCIAL WORK**



# 2009 Legislative Scoop Sheet

Volume 11. Issue 2 ~ February 3, 2009 Katharine Bobel and Nilda Fernandez, Editors

**From the Editor's Desk** ~ by *Katharine Bobel and Nilda Fernandez*

## **We have some exciting news regarding pay equity!**

Lilly Ledbetter filed a discrimination claim approximately ten years ago with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). After three Presidential Campaigns and endless litigation and arduous persuasion in Congress, Lilly was awarded \$360,000 in back pay. Even after receiving this award she continued to fight on behalf of women for pay equity. Her case gained momentum after the Federal Appeals Court threw out her claim. This resulted in a political "football" in 2007, and during the 2008 Presidential Campaign it became a point of contention. Then, Senator Obama supported the Act, where Senator McCain was opposed to it. On Thursday, January 29th, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act was the first bill signed into law by President Obama. This bill will help women and others fight pay discrimination in the workplace.

On another exciting note, the NAHPSW received notification from NARAL—Pro-Choice Connecticut regarding a few anti-choice bills that have been introduced this Legislative Session:

- **Proposed House Bill 5202— An Act Concerning the Mandated Reporting of the pregnancy of a minor age twelve years or younger.**
- **Proposed House Bill 5913—An Act Concerning raising the age of minors counseling**
- **Proposed House Bill 5632—An Act Concerning Parental or Guardian Consent of a Minor when seeking to terminate a pregnancy.**

The NAHPSW was notified of a change in the Legislative Agenda. The Healthy Teens bill was surprisingly introduced, by Representative Thompson. We will keep you updated on what happens regarding this bill and the other proposed bills.

**As we all know, the Governor will make her budget address on Wednesday, February 4th. This budget will be one of the most critical speeches in the state's history. After hearing what the address entails we will keep you up to date on any changes in the bills we will follow.**

## **24/7 Staffing at Domestic Violence Shelters** ~ by *Kate Parker*

Proposed Senate Bill No. 20 now has two co-sponsors, Sen. Andrea Stillman of the 20<sup>th</sup> District and Sen. Edith Prague of the 19<sup>th</sup> District. The bill is currently under consideration with the Joint Committee on Human Services. The Human Services Committee has jurisdiction over matters related to the Department of Social Services, Department of Children and Families, the Office of Child Day Care, the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the Board of Education, and Services for the Blind. If the 24/7 bill were to pass funding would be administered through the Department of Social Services. The Human Services Committee is co-chaired by Sen. Paul Doyle of the 9<sup>th</sup> District and Rep. Toni Walker of the 93<sup>rd</sup> District.

## **In-State Tuition Bill** ~ by *Nilda Fernandez*

Proposed Bill No. 15 is an Act providing in-state tuition to children of immigrants (children with out documentation). The bill was introduced by Senator Edith Prague (19<sup>th</sup> District) and Representative Widlitz (98<sup>th</sup> District) and has been referred to the Committee on Education and Employment Advancement. Other than being referred to the Committee, there has not been any activity on this bill. Stay tuned for upcoming updates.

This bill may mirror that of the Federal (Congress) the **Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act)** which may be followed in Congress this year.

**Establishing a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program** ~ by *Kate Parker*

Proposed Senate Bill No. 165 introduced by Sen. Debicella (21<sup>st</sup> District) proposes to establish a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Committee to advise the Office of Victim Services (OVS) on the establishment and implementation of a sexual assault forensic examiners program and to establish within available appropriations, such a program within OVS to train sexual assault forensic examiners and make them available to sexual assault victims who are patients at participating hospitals. A similar version of the bill was presented during the 2008 legislative session and received support. Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Programs or SAFE programs have been recognized by the National Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women as an important tool for the collection of evidence in criminal cases, but as importantly to reduce the re-traumatizing effects of forensic evidence collection upon sexual assault victims by providing skilled care and working in a collaborative environment with sexual assault crisis counselor advocates.

**Universal Healthcare** ~ followed by Courtney Cullinan

There are two bills this session that will deal with the issue of improving Connecticut's Healthcare system. One is S.B. 94: **AAC Expanded Access to the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan**. This bill aims to allow greater access to the state employees' health insurance plan and require pooling of federal health care funds in order to expand and enhance prevention health care. The second bill is P.S.B 678: **AAC Health Care Cost Containment**. This bill is a little more general in nature and it's main purpose is to provide affordable, quality health care to state residents. Both bills are in the public health committee. The committee can be reached at 860-240-0560. The chairs of the committee are Senator Harris and Representative Ritter. Call the committee and ask for these bills to be raised and heard at a public hearing!!

**Same Sex Marriage** ~ by Caryn Lacedonia

As of January 27, 2009 there has not been a bill raised in the 2009 Legislative session regarding civil unions or same-sex marriage in Connecticut. Various supporters of same-sex marriage argue that a win through the Supreme Court is legitimate. Therefore, it would be unnecessary to validate this win in the legislature. Stay tuned for the next legislative update on same-sex marriage.

**Electoral Reform** ~ followed by Addie Sandler

On January 23, 2009 the Government Administration and Election Committee voted overwhelmingly (14 yeas and 1 absentee) to draft a bill to study the need for early voting in Connecticut in order to minimize long lines on Election Day. The Government Administration and Election Committee has not taken any action on the act concerning voter day registration to promote voter participation by permitting people to register and vote on the day of a regular election.

**Affordable/Supportive Housing** ~ followed by Katharine Bobel

The Housing Committee met on January 29th to discuss their proposed bills for this session. Proposed House Bill 5071, An Act Concerning the Supportive Housing Initiative is one of the bills they will be discussing. There are several other housing bills that are being looked at as well. I had the opportunity to meet with Fred Stula, Committee Clerk for the Housing Committee who told me that a Public Hearing will be held on either February 17th or February 19th. Feel free to access the Reaching Home Campaign's website at [www.ctreachinghome.org](http://www.ctreachinghome.org). Click on the link Take Action to learn more about Reaching Home's Advocacy and supportive housing.

**Hearings and Events at the Legislative Office Building (LOB)**

Check the "Bulletin" online at <http://www.cga.ct.gov> for full details on daily hearings, events, committee membership listings and contact information. Most events at the Legislative Office Building and Capitol can be viewed live online or found in the online archives of the CT Network. It is a very useful tool for staying informed:  
<http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/>

**NAHPSW Resources**

Please contact NAHPSW for information related to the legislative process, testifying, finding your legislators or questions related to legislation that is of interest to you or your clients.



**Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work**

University of Connecticut School of Social Work  
1798 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117  
Phone: (860) 570-9262 Fax: (860) 570-9133  
E-mail: [politicalinstitute@uconn.edu](mailto:politicalinstitute@uconn.edu)  
Web: <http://www.politicalinstitute.uconn.edu>