



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



# 2009 Legislative Scoop Sheet

Volume 11. Issue 3 ~ February 17, 2009 Katharine Bobel and Nilda Fernandez Editors

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

The Governor has released her proposed budget and has proposed cutting ten state agencies that are duplicates of current regular state agencies, eliminating ten other agencies through logical consolidation, and eliminating seventy boards and commissions.

Once again, the NAHPSW has received information from NARAL-Pro-Choice Connecticut regarding the anti-choice bills that we mentioned in the previous LSS issue.

The four bills regarding raising the age of minors counseling, notification of a parental or guardian when a minor is seeking to terminate a pregnancy, mandated reporting on a minor, and making women look at the ultrasound before having an abortion have all died in their committees.

The Healthy Teens bill which was surprisingly introduced has also died in committee.

There is still a possibility that any of these bill topics can be brought up as an amendment. We will keep you posted.

We have also received notification of two public hearings regarding budget cuts:

- Wednesday, February 18th at 3:30 P.M. in room 2C

of the Legislative Office Building, regarding DSS budget cuts for prenatal care for pregnant women who do not qualify for Medicaid and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Block Grants.

- Friday, February 20th at 2:30 P.M. in room 2C of the Legislative Office Building, regarding DPH budget cuts for Family Planning and HIV/AIDS Funding.

If you would like to testify on either of these two dates and would like more information on either of the issues contact Jillian Gilcrest at (860) 524-1086.

### 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.

### 24/7 Staffing at Domestic Violence Shelters ~ by Robin Kraemer

The issue of 24/7 staffing for domestic violence shelters will be discussed at the **February 18<sup>th</sup> public budget hearing** of the Human Services sub committee of the Appropriations committee. **The hearing will be held in room 2C at 4 pm at the Legislative Office Building.** 24/7 and other domestic violence program funding is in the budget under the Department of Social Services and has not yet faced any proposed cuts. While the state has to make hard decisions based on the deficit, 24/7 is an important issue as the needs of domestic violence victims and their children are only likely to increase in these tough economic times.

### Multi-Level Licensure ~ by Sarah Chasse

NASW/CT continues to meet with legislative leadership on The Public Health Committee and address the concerns of state agencies regarding the exemption of state employees. The deadline for the Public Hearing Committee to raise the bill is, Wednesday, February 18th.

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

There has not been any activity on the In-State Tuition Bill. On January 8th it was referred to the Joint Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement.

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

HB 6361: An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program.

The Public Health committee heard public testimony on Wednesday February 12th. Their testimony was overwhelmingly in favor of establishing a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner/Forensic Examiner (SANE/SAFE) Rapid Response Team housed at the Office of Victim Services. The bill calls for a pilot program to be established working within one region of the state and with several hospitals to have SANE/SAFE respond to sexual assault victims in their emergency rooms to perform evidence collection and specialized care to survivors. The Public Health Committee heard testimony from Sexual Assault Crisis Program advocates from the New Britain, Hartford, and Middletown regions who testified to the disparity in wait time, skill, and experience between SANE's and untrained nurses and its impact on rape and sexual assault survivors. Representatives from the advocacy, medical, and criminal justice community also gave written and in-person testimony. If voted out of committee, HB 6361 could next go to the Appropriations or Judiciary Committee. To find out more information on Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners go to: <http://www.sane-sart.com/>

**Same Sex Marriage ~ by Caryn Lacedonia**

H.B. 6452, "An Act Concerning Discrimination" was referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary, Feb. 11, 2009. H.B. 6452 is intended to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or expression. Gender identity and expression refers to "a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's assigned sex at birth." This is the fourth year the bill has been raised. Hearings will likely begin in late March.



**Time for Change!**

**Electoral Reform ~ by Addie Sandler**

HB 5012, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING EARLY VOTING IN CONNECTICUT, to allow for early voting by absentee ballot in Connecticut was drafted by committee and referred to Joint Committee on Government, Administration, and Elections. **A Public Hearing is scheduled for Wednesday February 18th after the committee meeting at 9:30 A.M. in room 2B of the Legislative Office Building.**

There is nothing new to report on HB 5082 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION, To promote voter participation by permitting people to register and vote on the day of a regular election.

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

On Thursday January 29th, the Housing Committee met. A motion was made by Senator McKinney and seconded by Representative Butler to draft proposed H.B. 5071, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVE.

On Thursday February 5th, the Housing Committee held another committee meeting. This bill was then drafted by the Housing Committee on February 6th.

On February 9th, H.B. 5071 was referred back to the joint committee on Housing. **There will be a Public Hearing on Thursday February 19th at 1:00 P.M. in room 1C of the Legislative Office Building.**



**Universal Healthcare ~ by Courtney Cullinan**

On February 2, the Public Health Committee voted to draft Senate Bill 678 : **AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT.** This bill's underlying purpose is amend the general statutes to improve the prescribing patterns of health care practitioners, reduce the costs associated with the provision of state-funded health care and to improve the delivery of quality health care to state residents. I will continue to watch this bill through the committee process and update on any progress.



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