

## The Dorothy I. Height & Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act

**HISTORY** — On February 27, 2008 the Honorable Congressman Towns hosted a Congressional Briefing on Capitol Hill to celebrate the unveiling of the Dorothy I. Height & Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act. Congressman Towns credited the two social work pioneers with his decision to become a social worker. The Congressman stated that “Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., are two of my personal heroes.” The Congressman shared his insight into the need to establish the Dorothy I. Height & Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act. “I am aware of the significant contributions social workers make to the socioeconomic fabric of our nation, and equally aware of the troubling challenges that prevent my social work professional colleagues from continuing to deliver essential social services.”

“Millions of people are served daily by the nation’s social workers. America will increasingly demand the services of highly skilled professional social workers. Unfortunately, the social work community is not currently equipped to keep pace with this increasing demand for vital services throughout the country,” he explained. Congressman Towns introduced the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act to Congress to address the service and workforce needs of social workers in our country. Social Work Pioneer, Dr. Dorothy Height, shared her support for the legislative bill at the Congressional Briefing. “We are men and women who serve. Today, I am proud to be a social worker. With their leadership, they will help us awaken the country to the role of the social worker.”

According to the National Association of Social Workers, the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Work Reinvestment Act is the most comprehensive piece of federal legislation ever created to address the significant workforce challenges facing the profession of social work. The organization additionally shared information regarding the Honorable Congressman Towns first introducing the legislative act, H.R. 5447, on February 14, 2008, and the Honorable Senator Barbara Mikulski introducing the Senate Companion Bill, S. 2858 on World Social Work Day, April 15, 2008. The legislative act was developed to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide independent counsel to Congress and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on policy issues related to recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment in the profession of social work, and for other purposes.

## The Dorothy I. Height & Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act in Virginia

**PURPOSE** — To establish the Social Work Reinvestment Act with the Virginia General Assembly and the Governor of Virginia to support policy issues related to recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment in the profession of social work.

**SOCIAL WORKER** — The term “social worker” means an individual with a baccalaureate, master’s, or doctoral degree in social work from an institution of higher education accredited by the Council on Social Work Education who uses knowledge and skills to provide social work services for individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, or society in general.

- **WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENT FUNDING** — Shall provide funding to 1 eligible entity; To assist the entity in carrying out a workplace improvement program to address concerns for the social work profession, including caseloads, compensation, social worker safety, supervision, and working conditions.
- **RESEARCH FUNDING** — Shall provide funding to 4 social workers who hold a doctoral degree in social work for postdoctoral research in social work
  1. To further the knowledge base about effective social work interventions
  2. To promote usable strategies to translate research into practice across diverse community settings and service systems.
- **EDUCATION AND TRAINING** — Shall provide 4 eligible universities or colleges with funding to support the recruitment and education of social work students in Baccalaureate, Master’s and Doctoral degree programs and the professional development of social work faculty.
- **OUTREACH EFFORTS** — Shall work with National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education to
  1. Engage in activities to build on the efforts of the National Association of Social Workers National Center for Workforce Studies
  2. Shall develop and issue public service announcements that advertise and promote the social work profession throughout appropriate media outlets, including television or radio, in a manner intended to reach as wide and diverse of an audience as possible, highlight the advantages and rewards of social work, and encourage individuals to enter the social work profession
  3. Collect, monitor, prepare, and distribute data, and submit a report to the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Virginia General Assembly that includes recommendations regarding the need to recruit new social workers, retain current social workers, conduct social work research, and reinvest in the profession of social work