The Role of Social Workers in Policy Making

## Discussion post

In the political realm of policy making, social workers can play a crucial role by advocating for policies that align with social work values such as social justice, empowerment, and equality. Social workers can influence policy by engaging in grassroots advocacy, participating in policy-making processes, and working within political organizations to effect change. A significant role includes educating policymakers on the impact of proposed policies on vulnerable populations and ensuring that these policies reflect social work ethics. For instance, incorporating the capabilities approach, which emphasizes enhancing individuals' abilities to lead the kind of lives they value, can align well with social work values and ethics (Banks, 2020). This approach is particularly relevant in discussions of human rights and social welfare policies. Such involvement helps ensure that policies are not only theoretically sound but practically beneficial to those they aim to serve.

Aligning specific policy approaches with social work values involves critically analyzing current policies through the lens of social work ethics. A policy approach that focuses on political equality and participation is particularly aligned with social work ethics, which prioritize inclusivity and equality. Social workers are uniquely positioned to advocate for policies promoting political equality by leveraging their understanding of marginalized communities’ needs and rights (Krings et al., 2019). By participating in policy formulation and critique, social workers can ensure that policies do not inadvertently disadvantage these communities. Moreover, integrating social work education into policy-making processes can prepare future social workers to influence policies effectively. This proactive engagement in policy advocacy not only aligns with but also strengthens the core values of the social work profession.

## Classmate Posts & Your Replies

### Student 1 Post

Addressing problems requires the creation of policies. It usually entails putting up policies that are discussed and compromised upon, as Popple (2019) points out. In order to achieve political goals, policy formation depends on lobbying, compromise, and other tactics. The interests of lawmakers have an impact on the laws that are passed. Professionals in social work actively support clients in an action-oriented manner. Social workers require a clear knowledge and attainable goals in order to solve challenges. When creating a program or strategy, it is essential to establish objectives for assessments, enhance services, and guarantee client convenience. This method assists social workers in observing everyday difficulties, interacting with their surroundings, and adjusting to novel behaviors. Throughout the health policy process, social workers improve their contacts with clients by taking part in policies pertaining to health practices and research (Daniel P. Miller, 2017).

The National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics is consistent with policy approaches pertaining to the ethics and values of social work. Social workers' professional behavior is governed by these norms. The goal and guiding principles of social work are summed up in the beginning. A social worker's primary objective is to help those in need and address social concerns. Social workers should respect, question, and employ the ethical ideal of social justice to promote change. Social workers work to combat discrimination, poverty, and unemployment. They should support legislative and policy measures to improve social conditions and be conscious of how the political environment affects practice. Regardless of ethnicity, social workers should provide chances for marginalized, vulnerable, and exploited communities. According to NASW (2021), the code encourages policies and practices that uphold diversity, foster intercultural understanding, and assist organizations and initiatives that exhibit cultural competency.

### Reply

Your discussion highlights the fundamental role that social workers play in navigating the intricate landscape of policy formation, particularly through lobbying and compromise, as Popple (2019) notes. This aligns with my argument about social workers advocating for policy changes that embody social justice and empowerment. You emphasize the importance of setting clear objectives and enhancing services, which resonates with the capabilities approach's focus on individual empowerment (Banks, 2020). Furthermore, your mention of the NASW code of ethics underscores the need for policies promoting diversity and cultural competency, a critical aspect of ensuring political equality and participation (Krings et al., 2019). As we consider how social workers can influence policy, perhaps a collaborative effort among social workers, policymakers, and educators could further integrate these ethical standards into policy-making processes, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable social welfare system.