



To: The Honorable Liz Krueger, Senate Chair of Finance; The Honorable J. Gary Pretlow, Assembly Chair of Ways and Means; Senate and Assembly leadership, and all members of the committees

From: Payment for Placements (P4P) – New York Coalition

Date: February 24, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of the MSW Paid Field Work Pilot Program (S.7894/A.9379, Salazar/Simon)

We want to thank Senator Krueger, Senator Pretlow, and Senate and Assembly leadership for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to testify in support of the listed legislation below for the Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education.

[Payment for Placements](#) is a nationwide student-led movement, with chapters and similar pieces of legislation in California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, Texas, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Ohio, Minnesota, New Mexico, and more. The Payment for Placements (P4P) – New York Coalition is a statewide movement of students and social work professionals dedicated to ending the practice of degree-required, unpaid labor in social work education. We represent chapters across New York's leading social work institutions. We are writing today to strongly urge the inclusion of \$12 million in the final budget to fund the Master of Social Work (MSW) Paid Field Work Pilot Program (S.7894/A.9379).

This legislation would provide stipends to more than 5,000 Master of Social Work (MSW) students across New York State who are required to complete intensive unpaid field placements in order to graduate. To earn a Master's degree in Social Work, students are required to complete a minimum of 900 hours of internship, labor that is essential to the functioning of New York State's social services and yet is uncompensated.

These unpaid internships create a significant financial barrier to entry into the social work profession, impacting recruitment. It contributes to increased student loan debt, can delay graduation, and force students to take on additional paid work while attempting to excel in full-time course work. These factors shrink New York's social work pipeline as well as limit diversity in the field. At a time when New York is stepping up to confront challenges in child-care, public safety, public health, behavioral health, homelessness, veteran services, immigration, senior care, and housing, New York cannot afford to lose current and future social workers. Social work is a widespread and



multi-faceted profession. We are found at the intersection of all of these issues and many more.

S.7894/A.9379 is a pilot program of up to \$12 million dollars that will compensate over 5,000 social work students with \$4,500 per year for 450 hours of previously unpaid labor. This is a targeted investment in a pilot program to show that paying student interns will reduce attrition, bolster the workforce, and strengthen the state's social service infrastructure.

We urge the Governor, the Senate and Assembly, and leaders and members of this committee to prioritize the funding for S.7894/A.9379 (Salazar/Simon) in the upcoming budget. Tackling the many pressing issues of our beloved State, such as childcare, affordable housing, immigration, public safety, and homelessness, starts by addressing the social work workforce. Addressing the social work shortage begins with recognizing that social work labor—even at the student level—has value. Paying social work student interns is imperative to their wellbeing, and is a common-sense, smart return on investment for New York state's future.

Thank you for your leadership, for considering the collective voice of our coalition, and for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with Governor Hochul, Senator Krueger, Senator Pretlow, and the Senate and Assembly to make such a robust social work workforce a strong reality.

Respectfully submitted by these members of the P4P-NY Coalition:

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