

## **Social Work, Social Policy and Parliamentary Committees**

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The involvement of social workers in social policy formulation has been the subject of limited research, particularly in the UK. The goal of this study was to engage in a systematic examination of the degree to which social workers intervene in a crucial intersection of policy making – that of parliamentary committees. Parliamentary committees generally play a major role in the policy formulation process. This is also the case for social policy. These committees are typically an institution in which policies are deliberated and the details of new legislation debated and formulated. They are also a forum to which representatives of various interest groups, advocacy organizations as well as state officials, professionals and academics voice their opinions on policies.

Given their role in the implementation of social policy and their first-hand knowledge of the implications of social problems, this study assumed that social workers can be active participants in the deliberations of parliamentary committees dealing with social policy. Moreover, it was assumed that this type of activity should reflect the social work profession's commitment to social change and social justice.

This paper offers the findings of quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the role of social workers in the deliberations of parliamentary committees in Israel over a period of seven years (1999-2006). The findings indicate that Israeli social workers do indeed actively participate in the deliberations of various parliamentary committees. They offer an insight into the types of parliamentary committees in which social workers participate as well of the types of debates and the subjects and population groups upon which these focused. In addition, the data

sheds light on organizational and demographic characteristics of the social workers participating in parliamentary committees in the Israeli parliament and on the goals and strategies adopted in this form of practice.

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