

**Remarks of Jennifer Thompson, Executive Director, NASW-NJ**  
**Fair Redistricting Press Conference**  
**September 25, 2019**  
**Trenton, NJ**

My name is Jennifer Thompson and I am the executive director of the National Association of Social Workers -New Jersey Chapter. Today I have the honor of representing over 7,000 members and over 21,000 licensed social workers in the state of New Jersey—and in turn, the hundreds of thousands of clients, community members, and voters in every town, municipality and community here in New Jersey.

Today we are proud to stand in solidarity with not only our coalition partners, but the citizens of New Jersey in our call for fair redistricting.

Our system is broken and as social workers, we have an ethical mandate to ensure that every citizen has a voice in the public arena and that their vote counts. History has shown us that redistricting practices far too often serve to further disenfranchise individuals from historically marginalized and under-represented backgrounds, and we cannot stand idly by and allow this to happen in New Jersey.

Like it or not, today—perhaps more than ever before—there is a sense of distrust in our systems and political infrastructure. And to change that, to protect our democracy, we must come together, and both envision and build a system that includes the public. The system—our districting practices—must be open, transparent, and inclusive of all voices.

We know that our communities and citizens care about how district lines are drawn. We know that these lines impact whom our representatives are and informs the resources and policies and laws that impact each and every one of us on a daily basis.

NASW-NJ will stand and fight to protect the voting rights of all individuals.