



## **The National Association of Social Workers-MS Chapter Statement on Pauper's Burial Notifications**

The National Association of Social Workers, Mississippi Chapter joins with local leaders and organizations for an investigation into the 215 multiracial bodies found in a pauper's cemetery in Hinds County, Mississippi. We would like to express our deepest condolences to the families, loved ones, individuals, and communities. NASW-MS Chapter Board and staff express our support for the families and friends who have been overwhelmed with the burden and grief of discovering missing relatives have been improperly buried.

This type of act must be addressed, given full transparency and accountability, as to why families were not properly notified. Families deserve the right to know the whereabouts of their loved ones at the hands of any law enforcement agency, and we stand boldly against systematic social injustices of all people. As a professional social work organization, we believe the time is now to work together to address accountability in the reporting process.

We extend our professional help and want to work with the families and local organizations for a thorough investigation and accountability. We also recognize the need for certain services; however, we must ensure that this is the desire of families and loved ones. No family member should be shocked to learn their family has been buried without their knowledge. As a Chapter, we will remain vigilant to ensure proper death notification policies and procedures are implemented and are followed in the future. We ask for a citizen panel to review cases of decedents who are not claimed and to ensure that all families are properly notified in a timely manner.

**National Association of Social Workers-Mississippi Chapter  
Chapter Board, Executive Director, and Public Policy Coordinator**

01/08/24