

- Jesutofe Salau: [00:15](#) Hello to all of our listeners. My name is Tofe, and today is another great day to be a social worker. Welcome to Social Work, Amplified, a podcast, hosted by SPEAK, SPEAK stands for social policy, education, advocacy, and knowledge. And our mission is to amplify the voices of social workers by providing resources, increasing students' political engagement, and facilitating networking opportunities. SPEAK would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous support of Simmons Sister Fund at Texas Women's Foundation. I would like to introduce our guest for today's podcast, Sarah Crockett. Sarah Crockett is the Director of Public Policy at Texas CASA, which stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. Sarah grew up in Idaho and has a bachelor's degree in political science from Northwest Nazarene University. She obtained a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan in social policy and program evaluation in 2010 after gaining experience working on women's issue, domestic by and with the refugees. Sarah served as associate director of the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health prior to joining Texas CASA. Sarah has significant experience advocating for children and youth in foster care, both legislatively and in her role as a CASA volunteer for CASA of Travis County, Sarah, lives in Austin with her husband, two adorable boys and their dog. Hi Sarah. So nice to have you, how are you doing today?
- Amanda Crockett: [01:51](#) Hi, I'm doing great. Thank you so much for having me.
- Jesutofe Salau: [01:54](#) It's our pleasure. So we're going to go into our first question and like, I'm always interested to know exactly why people get their masters in social work. So what led you in updating your masters in social work?
- Amanda Crockett: [02:08](#) So I spent my undergraduate career, like really learning about, history and the history of political systems and sort of why, you know, some of the injustices that exist, exist and, you know, really kind of dove in into understanding all of the different social problems that we know about, but there weren't a lot of solutions. And so I knew I wanted to go into, public policy, but I really wanted to be able to focus on issues of social justice and working on systems that, impact people. And so I decided to pursue, a macro degree in social work so that I could, gain experience on, working on policy, but really focused on issues of social justice.
- Jesutofe Salau: [03:09](#) Great. And I do believe that the social work field, it's a really nice balance between learning about some of the issues that we have in society, like the issues, and then it also provides solutions. So you're not necessarily overwhelmed by problem after problem, but you also are given the tools to like, bring about change, like you mentioned. So I really think that is a good reason for entering the field of social work. So what made you decide you kind of, elaborated on little bit, but can you just give us a little bit more insight? What made you decide you wanted to concentrate in macro social work and you didn't take the micro route?

- Amanda Crockett: [03:50](#) Yeah, I think I always knew that I wanted to do, you know, macro work. I wanted to work in systems. I knew I wanted to sort of enter or face with, kind of political systems and changing policies. and I think also I had some concerns that I wouldn't be able to like appropriately set boundaries in a clinical setting. so, you know, one of the unique things about the university of Michigan is that they have a truly math macro program. so I did take a couple of clinical courses throughout my time at the university of Michigan and really focused on sort of group dynamics. but I had two macro field experiences and all of my classes were focused on, community organizing and policy rewriting and things like that. and so it really prepared me, to go into a field that's focused on policy and changing things, for the better for children and families, and other vulnerable populations.
- Jesutofe Salau: [04:59](#) That's good. Yeah, that's, that's really true. Like in the, social work program, it does give you the skills to work at that micro level, but it also, like, I believe that the micro skills are very necessary and they're very transferable and you need them in order to be effective in the micro field. So can you tell us a little bit about Texas Casa? What is the organization all?
- Amanda Crockett: [05:24](#) Yeah, so Texas Casa is the, statewide membership organization for the local Casa programs. There are 72 Casa programs across Texas, and last year we had over 10,000 volunteers. So Casa is actually the largest volunteer organization in the state. we're really proud of that. we served, a little over 28,000 children in youth in foster care last year. so the volunteers, are recruited by the local Casa programs and they're really just people in the community that want to make a difference. And they're appointed by the court, to represent the best interests of children and youth in foster care. And so they get to know the child and their family and their teachers sort of everyone involved in the child welfare case. And they make recommendations to the judge, without sort of like any other, you know, political or otherwise like agenda.
- Amanda Crockett: [06:30](#) Like they're really just there to represent what is best for the child. and so it's a really important and unique way to make a really meaningful, difference in the life of a child who's been abused or neglected. And so Texas Casa supports, the L the work of the local programs and the volunteers across the state. we do help help with marketing and great, and things like that. And then on my team, the public policy team, we work with the state agencies and we also work, at the capital and we, basically try to represent the best interests of children at the capital. And so we work on, legisla that will improve outcomes for children in youth and foster care. We work with a lot of youth who, are currently, or formally were in foster care to get their perspectives about what would've made their experiences better or what needs to change. and so it's a

really great, that is just all about, making things better for kids. who've had a really hard time.

Jesutofe Salau: [07:47](#) Yeah. And I think it's really important for children to have that form of advocacy, especially during that time of their lives, where, you know, a lot of their voices go unheard because of people are making decisions for them. And they're not at that point where they even know what exactly is going on. They probably haven't even processed due, like maybe the trauma that they're going through. So it's really important to like, have that advocacy. So does, I was just wondering, does every child in the foster care system get this Casa appointed individual? Or is it like, does a child chooses it, or how does it, how does that process work?

Amanda Crockett: [08:25](#) So we are not currently serving all the kids in care, statewide we're we're on about 60% of the child welfare cases, a lot of counties, where we serve are serving a high hundred percent of the kids in foster care. but many, uh don't and the main reason is because we need more volunteers. and so the, the all children in youth and care have to have, in, by law, they have to have, a guardian ed litem that is appointed by the court to represent the best interests of the child. And so that is generally the role that Casa plays in cases. So we basically, help fill a role that's already required by law. and then, you know, we're volunteers. So we get to spend a lot of time. Generally we're only volunteers only have one or two cases where you may have attorneys or, case workers that have, you know, 15, 20, 25 different cases, families that they're working with. And so the, the advantage of having a volunteer is that you have one person who's really just dedicated to your case and that's all. And so, it's a really great benefit to the court, but also a great benefit to children and families. and you know, really what we need is more volunteers across the state.

Jesutofe Salau: [10:00](#) Yeah. I was going to even ask. So like, that seems like a really, like, even as a social work student, myself, and for our listeners who are social work students, if they're trying to figure out a way to advocate for people or for children, I feel like this is a good way becoming a volunteer at Texas Casa, because that's exactly what you're doing, you're advocating for children. But, so for the people I know Texas, Casa probably accept volunteers that are not really in the social work field. So how does the training for them look like, because they're doing an important role advocating for children. So I know they're just not thrown into that. So what is like the training process, if you could just give us a brief overview?

Amanda Crockett: [10:40](#) Yeah. So Casa of volunteers, are required to get, over 30 hours of training. Some programs have, upwards of 40 hours. And, basically you learn about the history of the child welfare system. You learn about the child welfare system and the legal process here in Texas, which is a little bit different than other states. And, you learn, we do have some training on trauma. We have some training on recognizing your bias, and those kinds of

things. And, then we also require three hours of court observation. And then we also have a requirement for our volunteers to get, at least 12 hours of ongoing training every year. so that, you know, we kind of make sure that we're, that volunteers, you know, are constantly learning and growing. And then we also, the main role that the volunteer, or that the local programs play is they have volunteer supervisors who are professionals, that help support volunteers, answer questions, make sure volunteers sort of know what they're supposed to be doing, all of those kinds of things.

Amanda Crockett: [12:02](#) Um, we do have a lot of volunteers that are social workers. I'm a volunteer, I'm a social worker. but yeah, it's your point? I think a lot of folks are just people in the community that care, and want to make a difference. But I do think it is a great opportunity, for social work students, if they're interested in learning, like, do I want to work in the child welfare system? A lot of case workers are obviously, are, are obviously still social workers. So it's a great way to sort of figure out and, you know, get real experience on the child welfare system and see if that's a good fit for you without necessarily, you know, going through the, the whole process of getting a job and then discovering if it's a good fit or not.

Jesutofe Salau: [12:50](#) Yeah, that is very true. Yeah. So like, you said, you mentioned that you were, you were, you're a volunteer yourself. So how many, first of all, I like the fact that you guys do train the volunteers and they're just not thrown into it because I feel like sometimes that happens. you mentioned that, you know, the children may already have case workers and some case workers may just be thrown into it and, and just get a overwhelming, a high amount of cases. And they're not really able to focus on that one child, but you guys offer, you know, intensive training and then the, like the volunteers only have like a maximum of two, two, two cases, which is pretty good. So for you, since you've been a volunteer, how many, how long have you been a and how many cases have you have you had?

Amanda Crockett: [13:39](#) So I've been a volunteer for almost 11 years. so I was a volunteer actually before I started at Texas Casa. And it was one of the main reasons. I wanted to join Texas Casa because I understood the value of the volunteer, and wanted to work, you know, for the statewide organization on policy issues related to the child welfare system and supporting Casa. I think I've had now, four different cases. My first case was a sibling group of five, children and four of them were adopted, pretty quickly after, mom's rights were terminated, but the, the oldest one had experienced the most significant amount of trauma. And so I actually was on, his case for, a little over seven years. and, you know, throughout that time he had a lot of different case workers, and people kind of coming in and out of his life.

- Amanda Crockett: [14:44](#) And it was really meaningful to kind of, you know, grow up with him a little bit. by the time he was adopted, he, you know, I had known him for over half his life. And so that's really, you know, meaningful, obviously it's not ideal for a child to be in care that long. and that's something that I still think about a lot. what could I have done to get him out more quickly? but I do know that I was a really consistent person for him throughout that time. and you know, that really helped make a difference. and in that case, ultimately we, went back and looked at his original biological family, and he was able to be adopted by his grandfather. and one of the things that is really great about Casa is that we do a lot of family finding and family engagement, and that's a really big priority for us, for kids to be with their biological family members, if it's at all possible.
- Amanda Crockett: [15:50](#) Um, and so what's great is that sometimes you can go back, you know, it's been a few years, circumstances have changed for our family. let's go back and see if there's, a possibility now that maybe wasn't there before mm-hmm <affirmative>. and that's what we were able to do, for that kiddo. And it was really, really special and healing for him that he knew he was able to learn that his family loved him the whole time and missed him the whole time, and still wanted him. And, you know, I think because he saw his younger kids, his younger siblings be adopted, and he wasn't, he really felt that on a deep level, right? Like that was an additional rejection that, he kind of carried around with him. So to be able to reconnect him with his biological family was really, super meaningful. So that goes way beyond what you asked me about, but oh, great. You know, just, <affirmative>, it's just real, it's a really important and great opportunity. And I think something that I probably got a lot more out of, as an individual than I was able to contribute. Right. It's one of those experiences. but yeah, super meaningful.
- Jesutofe Salau: [17:10](#) And that's a great story because I was just thinking one of my classes that I'm taking right now this semester, our professor was mentioning how, like a high percentage of the children in the foster care systems, they don't get placed with their families, although they might have families living in their very neighborhood, you know, some foster children, they grow up and they realize, oh, I had a family right here in the very neighborhood I grew up in, but they weren't placed with them. And I think like Bo like volunteers within Casa, they do that. They do that work that helps them find their family and they get placed with them. Like the story you just mentioned. So that really like, just kind of gave me hope and that's a great story. And it actually really sparked my interest. And I don't know if it's sparking the interest of some of our listeners, because I'm going to go look into Texas Casa after this and see if it's something that I'm interested in doing, because like you said, it seems like a really great, valuable volunteer opportunity. So thank you for sharing that with us. I, so now that we know a little bit about Texas Casa, I just want to get to know

what do you do like on a daily basis at Texas Casa in your position, can you provide us like a brief overview on what a overall day looks like for you?

Amanda Crockett: [18:24](#) Yeah. So one of the great things about my job is that every day kind of, of looks a little bit different. during the legislative session, I, am super busy and, down at the capital basically every day, working on, different pieces of legislation that either we bring forward or are files, related to child welfare, and you know, working to see if it's good legislation, like we're really supporting it, we're trying to get it passed. And if it's, legislation that we have concerns about, we're trying to get it changed, or, you know, see if there's a way, that we can, stop it from going through. and then, you know, one of the things that's really interesting, and I don't think a lot of people realize is that, they sort of think like, oh, the law passed like great mission accomplished.

Amanda Crockett: [19:23](#) Um, but actually the most important aspect of, policy making is really in the implementation of the law. and so a lot of our work, is around making sure that legislation gets implemented a lot of laws pass and then actually never really go into effect. And so it's super important to hold the state agencies accountable, make sure that they're doing, everything that's require by the law, commenting on rule, making, participating in work groups, that are all about sort of implementing the law or are generating ideas for, how, you know, for legislation that might be needed. Like, so for example, right now I'm on a work group that's focused on kinship care, which is the term that we use in child welfare for placing kids with their family. And, we're looking at what are the barriers, for kinship caregivers and what can we do, as a state to not only increase the number of kids that are placed with their families, but then promote success of that placement once kids are placed with their families.

Amanda Crockett: [20:40](#) Um, a lot of our families, have, you know, significant financial barriers to just taking on a sibling group of three kids, all of a sudden, right? Like that's not something they were planning and probably not something that they can necessarily afford. and so what can we do as a system to sort of like wrap around that family, make sure, that it's a successful placement and, and, so, you know, there's work groups like that during the interim there's hearings that happen. there's always reports coming out about different, aspects of the child welfare system. there's federal legislation that we look at that needs to be implemented here in Texas. And then, you know, there's just issues that, are kind of always coming up, right. It's sort of never a stagnant thing. So we might have, suddenly a big increase in children that don't have placement in our sleeping and CPS offices, for example.

Amanda Crockett: [21:42](#) So then we sort of drop everything we're doing and try to work on that issue. and so we work with a lot of other, child welfare advocacy organizations. I'm in a lot of different coalitions that are focused on

improving different aspects of the child welfare system from like education to placement, to, you know, doing a better job of supporting family to try to prevent, kids from needing to come into the child welfare system. So it's a lot of reading and writing of emails participating in meetings. I would say you definitely need to be a little bit of an extrovert if you want to work in, policy because it, you do really interact with many people. and I love that aspect of the job like it is, you know, you talked about, clinical skills really transferring over, and I think that's really true.

Amanda Crockett: [22:42](#) You have to be able to build and sustain relationships with people. You have to be able to read people and understand sort of where they're coming from. And it takes a lot of practice to, you know, hear a perspective from a legislator that you may find like deeply offensive. and you need to sort of still meet them where they're at and help them understand, why. And it shoe might be, challenging and, you know, see if there's a way that you can come together and, you know, all of those skills are, are so are soft clinical social work skills that you really have to hone, and work on, you know, as much as, as much as anything. So I do think the other thing that's important is staying connected to the social work field, right? If you're out making policy and you're totally disconnected from what people are actually experiencing in the child welfare system or in any system, and you're not talking to the professionals that work with families, then you're probably passing legislation. That's maybe not getting to the heart of the issue or may have unintended consequences and make things more challenging. So that partnership between macro and my I grow social work is super important as well.

Jesutofe Salau: [24:08](#) Hmm that's that's true. So you did mention several things that stood out to me. So first of all, your day is very diverse. I think we kind of know that now, since we've been doing our interviews, a lot of macro social workers says that every single day is different. So that's, that's a good thing because I'm the type of person I want every day to be different. I don't want to do the same thing over and over mm-hmm <affirmative>. So I think that's a really good thing about being in the macro field every day is different. And you also mentioned that, what is the law one, one of the questions that I got, what is the law, if it's not implemented, that's like the most important part of about policy making, like making sure that that log that even passes is being implemented because there's some great policies out there, believe it or not, but the thing is we don't see them mm-hmm <affirmative> and we're just like, oh, we, we need a change, but it's like, there's already a policy that has been created and signed off on, but it's not being implement.

Amanda Crockett: [25:07](#) Right. And

Jesutofe Salau: [25:08](#) You also mentioned another thing in regards to, just, I'm just glad that you're doing what you're doing. Because recently in my class I learned



about how, you know, in the foster care system, you were mentioned that you're working on kinship placements right now. Mm-hmm <affirmative> that when children are placed with their kids or their relatives, their relative, they don't get that monthly stipend that will go to another family. That's not their relative. And, but you just mentioned that sometimes, you know, a relative is not able to take on like three children, you know? Nope. Nobody, I don't think anybody really is able to just take on three children. It's easy, especially in this world that we live in mm-hmm <affirmative> so it's like, why Aren, they getting some type of stipend or why aren't they getting anything right now? You know? So I'm really glad that you're working on things like that. And your day as a social worker, as a macro social worker does seem diverse, which is great. So how does the work in this organization fit your professional mission or experience? Did you, you like, did you always know that you were going to work with, children and families? Did you always know that you were going to work at this level?

Amanda Crockett: [26:16](#)

I don't think I knew exactly. You know, what issues that I wanted to work on. I knew I wanted to work. like I said, on social justice issues, I knew I wanted to work at the system level. but you know, I didn't know if I wanted to work on women's issues or, you know, immigration. I think there was just a lot of opportunities and I was interested in a lot. I think one thing a lot of social workers have in common is sort of, we care about every single thing mm-hmm <affirmative>. and I definitely am one of those social workers. And so, you know, I think what's really unique about child welfare though, is that you actually get to work on so many systems, right. Like kids in the child welfare system are on Medicaid. And so you've got to work on Medicaid and improving Medicaid, services.

Amanda Crockett: [27:08](#)

And, you know, the shortage of providers, is, you know, something that we talk about all the time, right? And then you work on education issues, children and youth and foster care are, you know, experience huge barriers to, high school graduation. And we have only like 3% of children and youth in that, or were that leave foster care at 18, go on to get any kind of secondary education degree, even though in Texas, we pay for their education fully up through the PhD level. we just don't see kids, willing or able to take advantage of those benefits. And then, you know, we also work on, substance use issues and domestic violence, and a lot of the challenges that families are experiencing that you lead to them interacting with the child welfare system. So it's a really unique, area of policy because there are so many, aspects to creating a, a successful system, right?

Amanda Crockett: [28:18](#)

Like we sort of think about, often their social workers talk about the Cru mental justice system being like the mental health provider of last resort. and for children, the child welfare system ends up being, you know, the provider of last resort, for a lot of families, like they're not able to access,



you know, a lot of mental health services or substance use. but if you interact with the child welfare system, you get bumped to the top of a lot of wait lists. And so, you know, I think it's just, it is a really unique and important, area of policy. And as I've worked on it more, I just get more invested, in improving things. Cause I think especially for children, there's so much hope. but there's also so much possibility that things could go wrong, right? Like we have so many kids who are in the child welfare system whose parents were also in the child welfare system when they go up. Right. And so we see that cycle, happen in the child welfare system, very similar to what happens in the criminal justice system. And so it's just a huge opportunity. Like there's so much hope. but there's also so much room for us to do better.

Jesutofe Salau: [29:46](#) Yeah. So like, I think basically what you said is that, although you weren't, it's not, it's not, it's not that you were necessarily driven to this field. Like you had a passion for, to do many things, several things, but within this field, it's so broad, you get work in like different aspects, different areas like Medicaid, but then like with criminal justice with laws. So it's kind of like a broad field, although you're in it right now. So that's really good. That's good to know about the, children and family field, because that's the track that I'm on. So I'm always telling people like I want to do a lot of things <laugh> so I really want to do, what do you want to do when you graduate? I'm like, I want to do a lot of things, but knowing that, you know, the field that I'm going to is going to give me that exposure. It's really great to know.

Amanda Crockett: [30:29](#) Mm-hmm <affirmative>

Jesutofe Salau: [30:31](#) So now let's move on to our advocacy questions. So you've shared with us, you know, several stories already, but I know that you have more, so there are many ways to remain politically engaged. So in your personal life, what are some of the ways that you choose to remain politically engaged?

Amanda Crockett: [30:50](#) Yeah, so I, I'm a deputy voter registrar. I'm, I'm on team. Everyone should vote. I think it's really important. And you know, one thing that you could and work when you work in the policy arena is that, you know, local politics matter. And, they actually affect our daily lives, you know, a lot more than like the presidential election. Right. But when we look at voter turnout, we see like most people vote in the presidential election, but they don't necessarily vote in like the bond elections or even in lo local, you know, state and Senator senatorial races. And so I think it's, really important to vote and stay engaged, stay knowledgeable about sort of local politics. as a lobbyist, as a registered lobbyist, you have to be really careful, in how you express your, political views publicly.

Amanda Crockett: [31:55](#) Um, just because, you know, people are paying attention to what you put on the internet all the time. And so, you know, I do think I'm limited in some ways and like what I can post on social media and things like that. But I think getting people registered to vote, I definitely have been known to schlep on down to a rally or two, to participate, in some rallies and things like that. but then also I think it's, you know, talking to my family and friends and making sure they know what's going on, at the Texas capital, I think it's really easy to, to pay attention to sort of what's happening on the national political stage, but I would encourage everyone if you're not, paying attention to the Texas Tribune. I think that's like the greatest resource, that we have for understanding what's happening at, at the Texas level. and at the Texas capital, Texas makes the national news a lot for its local politics. but there's a lot that doesn't make the national news. That's still, really important to know about.

Jesutofe Salau: [33:04](#) Mm that's true. I like how you mentioned talking to your family and friends, which is really, I think that's a really good way to do advocacy because some people don't know because some people, they try to stay away from the news and media because, sometimes it may be overwhelming or too disheartening. So like, you know, just keeping people informed in your circle. I think that's really important. And I, especially like when I receive information from people and then, you know, I go and verify it versus sometimes I don't, I'm not even going to, like sometimes I don't watch things sometimes I don't want to, I don't want to know what's going on. So if somebody, you know, comes in like have a conversation with me in regards to what's going, I'm like, oh really then I look into it. I'm like, oh, wow. So I really like your form of advocacy in that, in that respect. So what simple advice would you give social work, students who want to get involved with policy?

Amanda Crockett: [34:01](#) I would say, you know, set yourself up for success by, making sure you get a great field placement. I think that that internship is super important. you know, there are a lot of different, volunteer opportunities and internship. If you think you want to work in the capital, I would say try to get an internship in a legislative office. even if it's a legislative office that doesn't necessarily hold your political views, it's really great experience. and you will see, if, you know, it's something you want to do or not. and you know, I think most, house members, so most representatives, most of their staff during the session are actually interns. and so it's a great way to sort of get, involved in the then, you know, I would say, try to develop relationships, right? Like that's what it's all about. That's how you get jobs, that's how you, affect change. And so, you know, even if you're not in Austin, developing relationships, in your local community, do some in community organizing, maybe, see if the city council member where you are, needs an intern, right? Like I think taking advantage of those kinds of opportunities to build your resume and build relationships at the same time, is super, super important.

- Jesutofe Salau: [35:43](#) Mm. I like that advice building relationships, what came to mind for me is I was just thinking about mark Luther king, you know, he was one person, right. But he had so many people behind him. He had so many marching with them. It wasn't just him. It was a lot of people because of the relationship that he had built and, you know, change doesn't happen with just one person, although we may wanted to, but it takes more than one person. So therefore relationships are definitely necessary when we're talking about advocacy. So if you could start all over again with political social work, what would you do differently?
- Amanda Crockett: [36:26](#) That's so interesting. you know, I, I, maybe I would've gone to graduate school, a little earlier than I did. I took a couple of years off, after, through undergrad sort of like figure out what I wanted to do, and try to get some experience. so maybe I would've gone a little earlier. but you know, I don't know. I think I've had, a great, a great career so far I'm really have enjoyed everything that I have done. I would say, you know, even, even moving here from Michigan, I got my first job from, an internship that I had during graduate school. They had an affiliate here in Texas, made a call and I, I had a job before I got here, without really having to do a ton of work. And so, you know, I do think, not to harp on the relationships piece, but that's really what it's all about.
- Amanda Crockett: [37:36](#) Um, and so, you know, I don't know, I think Texas politics are, I tell people this all the time, like it might be harder to work in DC, in that political space, but also it might not like Texas is like up there in terms of just like the, the most, challenging one of the most challenging political environments to work in, especially as a social worker. and so, you know, I think make sure you surround yourself with people who, care about you and that you can, you know, confide in. so, you know, I don't know. I think, I think I've pretty be happy with where my career has gone so far. and you know, I, I really got lucky, I think, because I was able to just, I, you know, I had some mentors who advised me, on the types of field placements that would be good for me based on, you know, my interests and things like that. but I don't know. I don't know what I would've done differently. I think, I think it's been a pretty good ride so far
- Jesutofe Salau: [38:58](#) And that's good and that that's that's acceptable, but you did mention you would've went to graduate school earlier. And I just thought from what I grasped from that is just, you would've empowered yourself earlier in order to do the work sooner. And I think that's super important, you know, be the, to empower ourselves with the tools that we need because advocacy is work and it's actually hard work and you don't want to just go out there with no tools in your hands. You know, you need a tool belt, you need, you need the tools. So just empowering yourself as soon as possible, as soon as you know that you want to do advocacy, go ahead and start empowering yourself. And you can do in several ways going to

school, you know, you know, website and stuff like that. So there's so many ways to empower ourselves to be better advocates.

Amanda Crockett: [39:46](#) So, yeah, I think you said it, you, you pulled out exactly. Yeah, I, yeah. Yourself. I was scared actually. I wasn't sure if I would get into a social work program cuz I didn't have a social work background in undergrad. and so I, I was a little bit nervous about that. it turns out that social workers really want people to be social workers and it was not like a crazy horrible, you know, I was like, I'm going to get reject did from all these social work programs. Mm. which luckily didn't happen. But yeah, I think there was a little bit of like hesitancy and, and fear. So I think, yes, I would've empowered myself earlier to start this journey.

Jesutofe Salau: [40:31](#) Mm that's good. So, we kind of mentioned it a little bit, but I kind of want you to elaborate on it because I know a lot of people struggle with this. You know, we live in an information overload society. There's so much information around us, 24 7. So how do you manage, cuz I know that in order to do advocacy work, you need information. You can't just do it endlessly. So how do you manage information overload in a society that overloads us with so much information?

Amanda Crockett: [41:03](#) Yeah. I think it's important to actually limit the sources that you get your information from. Right. So I, I get a lot of information from my colleagues and people that I work with. and like from different organizations. but then, you know, like I have a few news sites that I pay attention to and I just kind of don't pay attention to any like a lot of other ones. Right. So like I mentioned, the Texas Tribune, I think the Dallas morning news and the Austin American statesmen, like really reputable news sources, that are going to give you the kind of information that you need to effectively do your job. Right? So for me, I need to know what's going on in Texas politics and that those are all great sources. I would say Twitter is also super important. a lot of legislators use Twitter to like announce the interim charges for the Senate and things like that.

Amanda Crockett: [42:03](#) Um, and in that case, you sort of are getting information from the horse's mouth a little bit. and so, you know, I would say Twitter is a, is an I in source of information, but only if you are trying to get something from the source. Right. So I wouldn't say to listen to everyone on Twitter, but if you want to know sort of what Dan Patrick is working on, like Dan Patrick will tweet about what Dan Patrick is working on. And so, that I think is a, is a key way signing up for press releases from, different, you know, like from the office of the governor and the Lieutenant governor, it's another great way to get information, but I would say, you know, figure out the,

Amanda Crockett: [43:03](#) You know, try to just like tune out the rest. Cause I do think that you can get overloaded and as social workers, we tend to get upset about every issue or at least I do. and so it's helpful for me. I get one daily email it's

called the skim, where they send me like national and international headlines, but it's like funny and satirical and it's like a little bit lighthearted. Yeah. so I get my daily dose of what's happening nationally and internationally and like short email. And then I, I don't check any national news sources. So, you know, I think figure out what works for you, but make sure you're getting your sources from, for either firsthand or, from reputable news sources.

Jesutofe Salau: [43:53](#) Thank you. So basically one figure out what works for you and you can also choose what you don't want to take in. Like, you don't have to have taken in everything and it's important. You probably want to choose what you don't want to take in so that you know, that when you come across that thing, you don't necessarily need to read it because you have already chosen not to take it in because you don't really need to take in every bit of information. You just have to find the ones that works for you that gives you the information that you want. And then just use that. So I'm going to, actually one more question, you kind of already mentioned a few good resources already, but in your opinion, what's the number one website that helps social work students with political social work or advocacy and how does this website help?

Amanda Crockett: [44:42](#) So, I think if you're a social worker and you want to get involved advocacy, I would say hooked up with the national association for social workers, Texas chapter. they, I work closely with them. they work on a variety of issues here in Texas and they really represent not only social workers, but social justice. and they do a great job of that. And they have a lot of different ways for social workers to get involved in advocacy. and so I would say follow them. And then if you want to know what's going on in Texas politics, the Texas Tribune is, is the main is the, is the source. I don't work for them. So it sounds like I'm just, I'm like getting a little stipend or something, but I don't, I just, I just know that that's something that I've learned. just throughout my time here is sort of like they get the scoop on, what's going on in Texas politics and that's their whole focus really of, of their news cycle.

Jesutofe Salau: [45:56](#) Okay. So the Texas Tribune and the NASW Texas Chapter, those are two good resources and I'm pretty sure they both have a website for students like me and students like our listeners to go check out and get some information on. So thank you so much, Sarah, for spending time with us today. Thank you to all of our listeners for joining us for another episode of Social Work, Amplified. I hope you were able to learn something today that empowered you to become more politically engaged and helps you shape a better tomorrow. Until next time.