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HARTFORD -- The Connecticut General Assembly's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) today called for passage of a bill to ensure equal pay for equal work.

In testifying before the Legislature in support of **Senate Bill 362, An Act Concerning Equal Pay for Equal Work**, PCSW Executive Director Teresa C. Younger pointed out that since the Equal Pay Act was signed in 1963, the gender-based wage gap has been closing by less than one-half of one cent per year. In 1963, women who worked full-time made 59 cents for every dollar earned by men, but by 2007, women still earned only 77.8 cents for every dollar earned by men. In Connecticut, that figure is even less: on average, a female Connecticut worker makes only 71 cents for every dollar earned by an equally qualified male.

"I am extremely pleased that the Legislature is taking a hard look at the gross inequity in wages based solely on gender," Younger said. "Connecticut is one of the most progressive states in the union, and yet we rank 37th when it comes to closing the gender-based wage gap. This means that only 13 states have a worse track record than ours when it comes to paying a woman what a man is paid for the same work. I applaud the General Assembly for considering a bill that will help remedy this barrier to a woman's financial security, and I urge its passage for the sake of all Connecticut families."

Other significant points made by Younger's testimony, based on the most recent data available from the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Census and the Institute for Women's Policy Research:

-- Women of color earn significantly less, with African-American women earning 70 cents and Hispanic women earning 62 cents for every dollar men are paid.

-- Over a lifetime (47 years of full-time work) the wage gap amounts to a loss in wages for a woman of \$700,000 for a high school graduate, \$1.2 million for a college graduate, and \$2 million for a professional school graduate.

-- The number of working women has risen from 18.4 million in 1950 to 67.8 million in 2007, and is anticipated to grow to 76 million by 2014. In Connecticut, women make up 51.3% of the state's labor force, 66.5% of private not-for-profit wage and salary workers, and 63.5% of local government workers.

-- The wage gap is not solely due to women's caregiving responsibilities; even when women work in the same occupations as men for the same amount of time, they still do not earn equal pay.

-- Female elementary and middle school teachers earn nearly 10% less than similarly employed men, despite comprising 82% of the field.

-- The disparity extends to highly paid professions: female physicians and surgeons earn a whopping 41% less than their male counterparts; female college and university teachers earn over 25% less than those who were male; and female lawyers are paid 23% less than their male colleagues.