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**PERMANENT COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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**Written Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Select Committee on Children
Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

Re:

SB 266, AA Establishing a Task Force to Study the Causes of Fatherlessness in Connecticut

HB 5499, AAC the Required Age for Counseling

Senator Meyer, Representative McMahon and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) on the above referenced bills.

HB 5499, AAC the Required Age for Counseling

HB 5499 would modify the statutory age requirement related to counseling for teenagers by abortion providers to reflect the recent statutory change recognizing juveniles as those under the age of 18. Many medical professionals testified in the informational hearing last year that this process is already done – teenage girls up to the age of 18 are counseled by abortion providers.

35th anniversary
PCSW

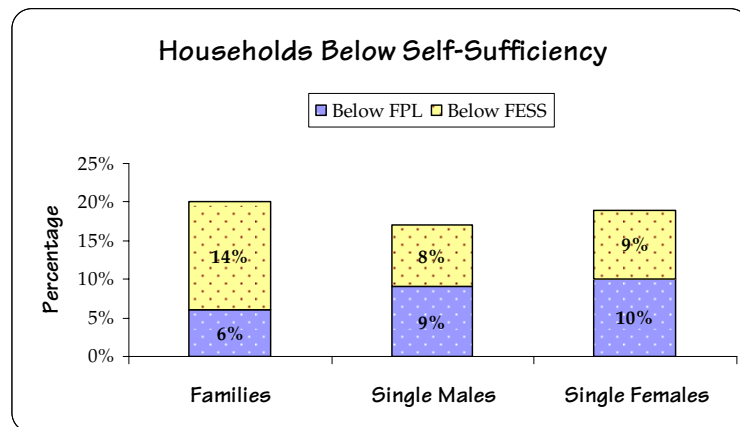
the State's leading force for women's equality

SB 266, AA Establishing a Task Force to Study the Causes of Fatherlessness in Connecticut

PCSW encourages the study into the concerns of fathers and strategies to enhance and support healthy families, however, we are concerned about the framing of this issue as “one of the root causes of poverty and other social ills.” Fatherlessness has been identified as the causes for many of the social ills in urban areas; however, only 23.5% of all Connecticut household are headed by single women; and 4.7% by single men, totaling 28.2% of children living in single parent homes.¹ This is significantly lower than the national average whereby 39% of children lived in a single parent household.²

Therefore, the overwhelming majority of households in Connecticut have two-parents. The overrepresentation of single parent households are in urban areas; therefore, rather than only focusing on parenting responsibility, one should focus on class issues, such as the elementary and post-secondary education system, jobs and work training, and the criminal justice system that greatly impacts these urban areas.

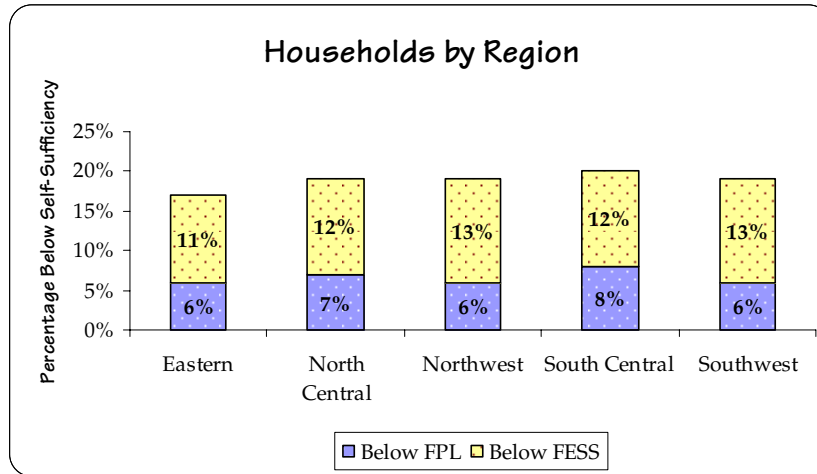
Across the board, despite gender and regional location, 20% of Connecticut working families do not have enough income to meet their basic costs of living based upon the family economic self-sufficiency standard (FESS).³



¹ US. Census, 2004 American Community Survey, Table B09001.

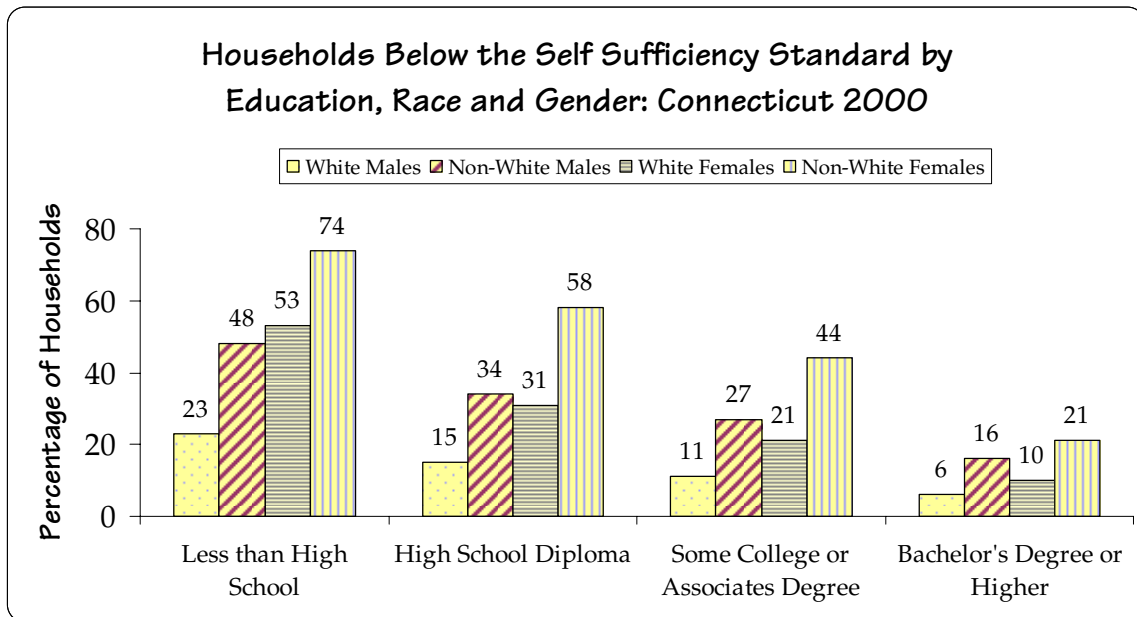
² US Census Bureau News, Feb 20, 2008, <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/children/011507.html>.

³ Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. *Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, June 2007 – also source for self-sufficiency charts.



Education and Training

PCSW supports efforts to address and increase basic adult education programs for low-skill, low-wage workers; and occupational skills training programs for incumbent workers and workers in vocational and technology fields. Householders with less education are much more likely to have insufficient income.



Source: Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands, June 2007, p. 17

While, increased education reduces income inadequacy for all race/gender groups, three trends are apparent:

1. As education increases, race/ethnicity and gender make less difference.
2. The returns for increased education are greatest for women of color.
 - Income inadequacy falls from 74% for those without a high school degree to 21% for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher.

3. Women and people of color need more education to achieve the same level of economic self-sufficiency as White males.
 - Women of color with a Bachelor's degree or higher still have higher rates of income inadequacy than White males with only a high school diploma (21% vs. 15%)

We look forward to working with you to address these important issues.
Thank you for your consideration.