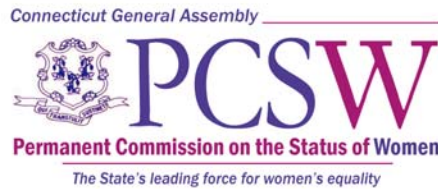


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**Written Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Appropriations Committee
Tuesday, February 17, 2009**

Re: H.B. 6365, AAC The State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2011, and Making Appropriations Therefor – Department of Labor Budget

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the Department of Labor budget.

Education and Job Training

The Governor's budget proposes to combine funding for Jobs First Employment Services and TANF Job Reorganization and reallocate funds for education and job training to the Middle College Initiative. We encourage the maintenance of these programs during this economic downturn.

In December 2008, women made up 85.4% of those receiving Jobs First Employment services.¹ With rising unemployment, job training and education services are vitally needed. When the recession first hit, it impacted males more than females because it hit the construction and manufacturing sectors which are dominated by men. However, since September the recession has spread to female-dominated retail and service sector jobs, and women's unemployment has risen faster than men's unemployment nationally (20% vs. 16%).² Nationally in December 2008 the unemployment rate was 7.2% and 7.1% in Connecticut.³ Nationally, among adult women the unemployment rate reached 5.9%, the highest in 15 years.⁴ This translated to an

¹ CT Department of Labor. "Labor Market Information At-A-Glance," December 2008.

² U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation: December, Tables A-1 and calculations by the National Women's Law Center.

³ CT Department of Labor. "Labor Market Information At-A-Glance," December 2008.

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation: December 2008," Tables A-1, A-2, A-3 and A-7 (January 9, 2009).

unemployment rate of 9.5% among women who maintain families, 8.9% among African-American women, and 7.9% among Hispanic women.⁵

Individual Development Accounts

Women are less likely than men to have a financial cushion, due to inequities in pay, more frequently interrupted work patterns and longer life spans. More than half of young single women age 25 to 34 report living paycheck to paycheck and spending all their earnings every month.⁶ Female-headed households have an average net worth of \$88,400 and households headed by persons of color have an average net worth of \$6,700, as compared to male-headed households with an average net worth of \$167,700.⁷

We urge you to reject the Governor's budget proposal to eliminate the funding for Individual Development Accounts because it is a means for women to gain modest assets.

We appreciate your attention to these matters.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mimi Abramovitz and Sandra Morgen. *Taxes are a Woman's Issue: Reframing the Debate*. New York: National Council for Research on Women, 2006.

⁶ CFED, endnote 11.

⁷ Ibid.