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PCSW Supports Bill Requiring Gender-based Reporting

HARTFORD -- Teresa C. Younger, executive director of the Connecticut General Assembly's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), today called upon the Labor and Public Employees Committee to pass a bill requiring employers annually to submit wage and gender data.

In ensuring that the state's companies and agencies gather this data, House Bill 6189: An Act Concerning Statistics Based upon Gender in Wage Reports would allow the PCSW and other agencies to more accurately assess the prevalence of gender discrimination in the workplace, and would make it easier to form public policy that would enhance equality.

"We have been working on wage equity issues for years and have found that the current data does not accurately reflect the wage status of women in the State," Younger said in her testimony. "Due to lack of data, we have taken different avenues to highlight wage inequities. For example, we have compared female-dominated jobs vs. male-dominated jobs because the data is not available in each occupational category reported by the Department of Labor (DOL). But the problem extends beyond DOL data because there is no requirement for any agency to collect the data."

Saying that State agencies and Connecticut businesses can no longer ignore the fact that wage data by gender is not collected, Younger called for a data collection system that includes:

- Average income by occupation type, and by gender in Connecticut (along with projected growth in jobs, current annual openings)
- Connecticut State and local sector employment and average earnings, by gender
- Connecticut workers employed in a field of study related to their degree, by gender
- Connecticut earnings by union/non-union status, by gender
- Number of Connecticut workers in the licensed trades, and their earnings, by gender
- Numbers of workers in non-traditional occupations and their average annual earnings, by gender
- Female graduates of Connecticut's Higher Education system and their wages by field of degree
- Connecticut workers with pensions and other retirement benefits, by occupation type and gender

"Most of the needed data could be obtained through passage of H.B. 6189," Younger said. "This bill acknowledges that without information, we cannot strategize the solutions to eliminate existing disparities. We understand that full implementation of this bill would produce a substantial fiscal note; therefore we suggest that if employers are not already collecting this information, they incorporate it when compiling new forms, applications, or websites. The State needs gender wage data to adequately support 51.3% of its workforce. It is needed to plan and target resources in order to raise women's wages, empower women to achieve wage equity, and simulate growth in Connecticut."