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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 Human Services Committee Thursday, February 28, 2008

In Support of: SB 414, AAC The State-Funded Home Care Program for the Disabled and Personal Care Assistance Program for the Disabled

Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on the above referenced bill. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), and the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign (CWHC), a statewide coalition of organizations representing consumers, providers and policy experts who have been committed to and working for the health and well-being of Connecticut women and girls for over ten years.

PCSW and CWHC support these proposals to provide additional funding to the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled Pilot to serve approximately 20 more people in the next fiscal year; and, increase the funding for the Medical Personal Care Assistance (PCS) Waiver Program, which currently has a huge waiting list.

The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled assists approximately 40 people aged 18-64 with degenerative, neurological conditions,

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who are not eligible for other programs and who need case management and other supportive services. Home care for the elderly has saved the state millions of dollars; providing this type of care for all people with disabilities improves their lives and can be cost effective as well.

Adequate funding would insure that elders and people with disabilities who need help with activities of daily living but have limited family support, have cognitive impairment, and/or have needs that change and progress over time are able to remain in their homes, rather than in long-term care institutions

The U. S. Supreme Court ruling in Olmstead v. L. C.¹ mandates that services be available to meet the needs of such persons wishing to live in the community. Connecticut's Long-Term Care Plan specifically states, "The overall goal for Connecticut's long-term care system should be to offer individuals the services and supports of their choice in the least restrictive setting." But more important than either of these directives is the desire of the elderly and people with disabilities to remain independent through self-directed care in a community setting.

We urge your support of this proposal.

¹ Olmstead v. L. C., 119 S. Ct. 2176 (1999).