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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Judiciary Committee
Tuesday, March 24, 2009**

RE: S.B. 537, AA Providing Community Reintegration Services to End-of-Sentence Inmates

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. 537, AA Providing Community Reintegration Services to End-of-Sentence Inmates, which would provide reintegration programs to those that have served their maximum sentence, in the same manner as it is done for those released on parole or any other form of community supervision.

Since 2000, the number of women in prison has been about 1,200 a year. As of January 2009, 1,267 women were incarcerated, representing almost 7% (6.68%) of the prison population.¹ Since women represent such a small portion of the prison population, re-entry programs rarely address their needs or concerns.

PCSW conducts workshops at York prison, and we have heard all too often about women serving their full sentence at York without the benefit of supervised parole, transitional supervision or probation and no place to go upon release. They have no families or support systems to return to, or just do not want to return to the environment they were in before their incarceration. Women who have been released without a discharge plan often end up in homeless shelters or in situations that lead to their reentry into the prison system. Community supports for inmates, who are released, paroled or on probation will reduce the probability that those released from prison will recycle back into the system. The availability of such support services will not only save the state money, but will also help those who are released to become productive members of society. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

¹ Connecticut Department of Correction. *January 1, 2009 Statistics of the Incarcerated Population*. March 20, 2009 <www.ct.gov/doc/cwp/view.asp?a=15-5&q=418788>.