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PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality

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**Testimony of
Teresa C. Younger
Executive Director
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Tuesday, February 17, 2009**

In Support of:

S.B. 113, AAC Unemployment Compensation

H.B. 6189, AAC Reporting Statistics Based Upon Gender in Wage Reports

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of S.B. 113, AAC Unemployment Compensation and H.B. 6189, AAC Reporting Statistics Based Upon Gender in Wage Reports.

H.B. 6189, AAC Reporting Statistics Based Upon Gender in Wage Reports

We thank you for raising a bill on one of our priority issues in H.B. 6189, which would require employers to annually submit wage and gender data. As you are aware, 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. 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.

This summer during the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) process, we discovered that in order to insure that **All Connecticut Women are Economically Self-Sufficient**; we could no longer ignore the fact that wage data by gender is not collected. The RBA process gave us a clear data development agenda, which includes research questions to enable PCSW and other state

agencies to bring women into higher wage work and put those who have lost jobs back to work. Highlights of data needed include:

- 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 Connecticut 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. 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.

S.B. 113, AAC Unemployment Compensation

PCSW also supports S.B. 113, which would allow individuals receiving unemployment compensation to work on a part-time basis while receiving unemployment benefits so their income will equal their income prior to filing for unemployment benefits.

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%).¹ Nationally

¹ 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.

in December 2008 the unemployment rate was 7.2%.² Among adult women the unemployment rate reached 5.9%, the highest in 15 years.³ This translated to an unemployment rate of 9.5% among women who maintain families, 8.9% among African-American women, and 7.9% among Hispanic women.⁴ In Connecticut in December 2008, the unemployment rate was 7.1%,⁵ however due to the lack of gender data collection; we do not have the unemployment rate for women.

A means to supplement unemployment insurance would help families maintain self-sufficiency during the recession, relieve some of the burden from the State to provide safety net services, and position the State for a successful recovery.

We appreciate your attention to these matters, and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

² CT Department of Labor. "Labor Market Information At-A-Glance," December 2008.

³ 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).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ CT Department of Labor. "Labor Market Information At-A-Glance," December 2008.