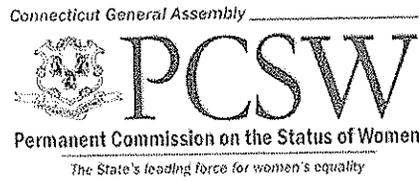


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**Testimony In Support of the
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW)**

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Testimony On Behalf Of The
Connecticut Regional Office of the
Anti-Defamation League

IN OPPOSITION TO
PORTIONS OF HB 6365
AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE
30, 2011, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

February 11, 2009

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 with a mandate to fight the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today the ADL is one of the country's leading civil rights and human services organizations. The Connecticut Regional Office of ADL is based in Hamden and serves the entire state of Connecticut.

We submit this testimony today to express our opposition to the portions of HB 6365 that would eliminate the African-American Affairs Commission, Commission on Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, and in support of the maintenance of those Commissions as separate entities in Connecticut's state government.

The Commissions are an invaluable resource to the community and provide an important voice representing the interests of African-Americans, Latinos, women, and Asian Pacific Americans in the state. Their role monitoring legislation, helping to develop significant policy and initiatives and holding government accountable is vital to serving the needs of their respective communities. Their existence as separate entities dedicated to this objective is of particular importance, since many of their constituents may not be in a position to retain private lobbyists or others to speak on their behalf, and they may otherwise have no presence or participation in the state's lawmaking process.

In ADL's efforts to fight hate, build hope and safeguard liberty, we work with the Commissions on a regular basis. The Commissions are key partners for ADL in our work monitoring and advocating on behalf of legislation relating to hate crimes, immigration, and discrimination, as well as in the implementation of our anti-bias and diversity educational programming. Partners like the Commissions are essential to ADL's pursuit of justice and fair treatment for all in Connecticut, and to the well-being of African-American, Latino, female, Asian Pacific American and other individuals throughout the state.

We urge you to reject the portions of HB 6365 that eliminate the African-American Affairs Commission, Commission on Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and to maintain their important presence as separate entities in Connecticut's state government.

**Written Testimony of
Susan S. Addiss
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian:

I write on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, which the Governor's proposed budget would eliminate. This seems to me to be a classic example of penny-wise and pound-foolish. Over the 35 years of its existence, PCSW has had a significant impact on the lives of CT's women. But there is still much work to do on their behalf, and without this Commission, I am afraid that it will not get done.

PCSW's work has resulted in improvements in the economic and financial security, as well as the health and safety of CT's women. The Commission has addressed such important women's issues as sexual harassment, family and medical leave, gender-specific health insurance coverage, and trafficking, to name just a few. It has recommended policies in these areas, many of which have been realized in state legislation or administrative procedures. It has also conducted training in these and many other areas, and has carried out research to cast light on the issues it addresses. Such documents as the Report Card on the Status of Women 2009 provide bases for action by the Legislature and by women's advocacy groups throughout the state.

One such group, the CT Women's Health Campaign, is a spinoff of PCSW. Formed in 1994, it has been a tireless advocate for improvements in women's health for 15 years, prioritizing the issues each year, and working to achieve the passage of appropriate legislation or regulation. We have been able to check off many items on our annual lists as the years have gone by, but we could not have done so without the in-kind support of PCSW.

Still inadequately addressed are such important issues as the continued poverty of female-headed families in Connecticut and the health and related problems of women prisoners in our state. Without PCSW to provide us with the research necessary to develop wise interventions and the training and education needed to carry them out, I fear a setback in the long struggle to improve the status of Connecticut's women. Such a setback will affect the well-being of men and children in the state as well.

That is why I believe it would be penny-wise and pound-foolish to eliminate the Commission. I hope that you and your committee will agree, and find a way, even in these difficult times, to continue the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Susan S. Addiss, MPH, MUrS
Former CT Commissioner of Health
Executive Committee, CT Women's Health Campaign

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

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March 9, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

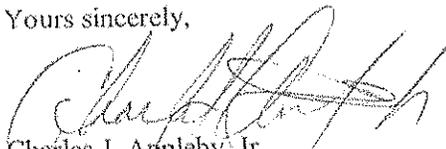
I am writing on behalf of the three Connecticut locals of the New England Regional Council of Carpenters. It has come to our attention that current budget cut recommendations for the State of Connecticut may include dismantling the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), or folding it into another agency.

The PCSW has been a vital force in Connecticut for training and placing women in nontraditional occupations, including carpentry. It has been our direct experience that its efforts have helped move many of these women and their children out of poverty, steadily year by year. Further, the PCSW has helped to create a culture in which construction jobs for women are beginning to be accepted as normal, placing these breadwinner jobs within women's reach and acting to reduce the disproportionate burden of poverty on women and their children.

Still, this work is not done. The gains of the last twenty to thirty years need to be reinforced and solidified so that construction contractors become used to routinely meeting or exceeding the standard affirmative action goals for women.

We believe the loss to the state and its citizens from shutting down the PCSW would far exceed the cost of keeping it open. Even in these difficult times some funds, like education funding, are investments that more than pay for themselves in the economic benefits they stimulate. Our experience suggests this is such an investment. We urge you to keep and fully fund the PCSW.

Yours sincerely,



Charles J. Appleby, Jr.
President, Carpenters Local 24

C: Margaret Conable

February 9, 2009

Senator Toni Harp
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Harp:

I am writing on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) which was scheduled to be eliminated in the Governor's budget.

As the first Executive Director of the PCSW in 1973-1975, I can remember that there were always members of the Legislature and/or Governors who sought to do away with this Agency that has represented and served the needs of one-half of the population of Connecticut. It has not been without its detractors from its very beginning, hence the important "P" in its name—for the very permanence needed to conduct its important work.

I am not unmindful of the budgetary problems facing Connecticut and there will have to be adjustments, some of them, painful at this time. Women, and women's issues, are frequently vulnerable and often considered to be among the first to be sacrificed.

As Co-Chair of the Appropriation Committee, I urge you to retain the funding for the PCSW so it may continue to do its important work.

Kay V. Bergin
Former Executive Director PCSW
25 Steuben Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

From: Carol Buckheit [mailto:carol@lmfct.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 11:21 AM
To: Rep. Geragosian, John
Subject: PCSW

Hi John,

I hope all is well—I saw you at the Rutgers game last week, but couldn't get your attention to say hi!

I am just writing to express my concern about the PCSW. I know that the Governor's budget has proposed eliminating PCSW, and I can't ask you enough to do everything in your power to ensure that won't happen. There simply still is a long way for women to go, John, in so many arenas—from equal pay for equal work (Lily Ledbetter comes to mind), protection from domestic violence, to protecting our reproductive rights. PCSW insures that women continue to be at the table and continue to have a voice, and there is no more stronger voice for women in Connecticut than PCSW and Teresa Younger.

I trust that you are carefully looking at other options to ensure that PCSW survives these tough economic times. I don't envy your task, but I do have the utmost confidence that preserving the PCSW will benefit women and the state of Connecticut for years to come.

Sincerely,

Carol Buckheit

Carol Buckheit
Associate Director
Love Makes a Family
576 Farmington Ave.
Hartford, CT 06105
Tel: 860-525-7777
FAX: 860-525-8888
E-mail: carol@lmfct.org
Web: www.lmfct.org

Written Testimony of Cari Carter-Pierides – Meriden, CT
Before the Appropriations Committee
Re: The Importance of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Good afternoon Sen. Harp and Rep. Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. I wanted to speak today in support of keeping the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women alive and well for years to come. As many of you know the PCSW has made amazing steps forward for women in CT by addressing issues like sex discrimination, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, economic security for women and the list goes on. More importantly the PCSW has empowered women of all ages to seek out their path in life and I am proud to say I am one of those women.

My involvement with the PCSW started when I was a grad student at the UConn School of Social Work. I had attended a training on how to work with the press, and to this day I still use elements from that training in my work as a community organizer for a non profit organization. I realize this may not seem like much but for me and the others in that training and other trainings that followed it was a stepping stone towards feeling confident and prepared for our future professions. Once I was entered the work force after graduation I continued my involvement with the PCSW. As a new social worker I felt at home as a member of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign - a coalition of experts and advocates working to improve the health care of women and girls. Through my work with the Campaign I realized that I had a passion for women's health issues and that there were opportunities to be involved in making healthcare more accessible and affordable for women and their families. This passion led me to a job as a healthcare organizer for a non profit organization that works with the statewide Healthcare4every1 Campaign. That is where I am right now, but my journey with the PCSW did not end there. In 2006, I was asked to be involved with a new program that the PCSW was starting called the Young Women's Leadership Program. This group of young women not only cared about the issues of young women in CT they also realized that they needed a voice at the legislature. The issues that young women deal with are different than those of women and those of girls, so to be a part of a group that was ready to bring this voice to the table was an amazing experience. Through this experience with the YWLP, I was introduced to so many amazing young women and realized that there were opportunities to get even more involved in issues dealing directly with young women and health care. I took the experience I had working with the YWLP and got involved with the NARAL Pro-Choice CT, where I am currently the chair of their Political Action Committee. My journey isn't over yet, not even close, and I know that the PCSW will continue to help guide my career and my work as an advocate for women's healthcare issues.

I am strongly encouraging you to keep PCSW alive and well for generations to come, there is still much work to be done and many young women ready to be trained and guided to do it.

Thank you for your time.
Cari Carter-Pierides, Meriden, CT
(203)379-5109



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Teresa Younger
Connecticut

January 9, 2009

Ms. Teresa Younger
Executive Director
CONNECTICUT PERMANENT COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Teresa:

As the only professional association for commissions on women, the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) recognizes and appreciates the long-standing leadership of the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). From its early days, NACW has benefited from the productive participation of the PCSW, including having one of your commissioners, Pat Hendel, serve capably as president. Her guidance and mentorship of not only our organization but many of our members is an honored part of our legacy.

Additionally, the PCSW has unselfishly shared its ideas and experience with commissions across the country, providing much needed real-life reference for countless women's commissions. In this unique work that we do, it is crucial that those who possess talent and expertise counsel new and developing commissions to ensure their success.

From the officers and board of NACW, thank you for the support of the Commissioners and Staff of PCSW for your continuing support of women in Connecticut and our nation. You are examples of what we can all be, and we appreciate the opportunity to emulate your outstanding commission and example.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Coffey
President

The National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) is committed to equality and justice for women by increasing the effectiveness of member commissions and serving as their national voice.

Testimony of Daphne Davis
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

My name is Daphne Davis and in 2006, I was an unemployed single mom on state assistance and was finding it extremely difficult to find employment due to my criminal record.

I saw an ad in the paper for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (NEW) Training Program. This was a program for women that were interested in pursuing a career in the building and construction trades.

I completed an application and went through assessment process and was accepted into the program.

I can not express enough how much the support from the PCSW has changed my life. Through the program PCSW provided, I gained the confidence and motivation to pick myself up and not be a victim anymore because of my past. I got my driver's license and a car. I worked extremely hard to get my high school diploma. I am thrilled to be attending Capital Community College in the Spring (2009) to pursue a career as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor.

One of the more important issues that needed to be addressed was my criminal record and with the assistance from PCSW, I am now in the process of getting my pardon.

I know of many women that the PCSW has assisted and to not have the Commission available to the many more women that will follow me would be devastating.

Randi Frank Consulting, LLC
7 Promontory Drive
Wallingford, CT 06492
February 10, 2009

Senator Toni Harp and Representative John Geragosian
Appropriation Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Appropriation Committee

I am unable to attend the hearing set for February 11th related to the funding of the PCSW so I am sending this letter instead.

Many people will testify about all the wonderful things that PCSW have accomplished in the past such as those items listed on the attached fact sheet. I have worked with PCSW when I was a municipal employee and have been in a sense a client since 2000 when I became a women owned business. They are a tremendous support to women owned businesses.

The example I would like to talk about is one where I have some expertise. I was trained to provide sexual harassment prevention training for municipal governments by the previous director of PCSW. I have used this skill to provide sexual harassment prevention training as a consultant. Even though the law about preventing sexual harassment and the law related to training of supervisors about sexual harassment have been in place for over 20 years I still handle questions about this issue on a regular basis. Without PCSW this important issue that women have to deal with will not be on the front burner. This is only one example of what PCSW has done for women in the workplace.

I understand the State budget needs to be reduced because of the economy but the PCSW should not be eliminated completely - Women need an advocate.

Sincerely,

Ms. Randi Frank,
Managing Member

Testimony of Jillian Gilchrest
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jillian Gilchrest and I am a steering committee member and legislative chair to the Young Women's Leadership Program, a project of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

The Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP) was established in 2006 and is lead by a group of young women representing a wide variety of career fields and areas of expertise. Focusing on ages 18-35, the mission of the YWLP is to promote awareness and inspire and empower young women to emerge as leaders. I am here in opposition of the Governor's proposed elimination of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW).

I was asked to join the YWLP at its inception while employed at the Connecticut General Assembly as a Legislative Aide and Committee Clerk for this very committee. To be asked to join the YWLP, a project of the PCSW, was a tremendous honor for me. As an undergraduate at the University of Connecticut I had attended PCSW events that encouraged female participation in government, and had looked up to an institution with such a long history of promoting women's equality.

My experiences with the PCSW, as a member of the Young Women's Leadership Program have been invaluable to me and my development as a leader. Our program has over 320 members and has accomplished quite a bit during our nearly three years in existence. We have conducted body image workshops at college campuses throughout Connecticut, legislative advocacy trainings to students and young professionals, have held networking events and have plans to offer trainings on career development, financial planning, and home ownership.

The PCSW Young Women's Leadership Program provides Connecticut's young women with a network within which to develop themselves and their careers. Many of our members struggle to find a network once they have graduated or moved into the work force. The PCSW's Young Women's Leadership Program encourages young women to develop as leaders in Connecticut, whether that is in their family life, professional life, or public life. In addition to our leadership development and networking programs, the YWLP is the voice of young women at the legislature. Too often, the voices of young women, ages 18-35 are left out of policy decisions and debates. The YWLP has testified on more than 75 pieces of legislation, providing a unique perspective on such things as bullying, the solicitation of

credit cards, affordable housing, and reproductive health. We engage with our members about the legislative process and incorporate their opinions in the development of our legislative priorities.

For me personally, being a steering committee member of the Young Women's Leadership Program has had a direct impact on my life. When I joined the YWLP, I had aspirations of being a leader on women's issues in the state, but didn't quite have the leadership skills to make that vision a reality. Since joining the YWLP, I have become a board member of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, a trustee of the National Association of Social Work Connecticut Chapter Political Action Committee, and the Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut, a statewide non-profit organization.

I understand that our state and our country is facing harsh economic times and some cuts are necessary, but to eliminate the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women would be a grave loss to this state. Over their 35 year history, the PCSW has been a leader on women's equality in this state and nationally, but the work isn't over.

The young women I know are still struggling with how to balance work and family, how to negotiate a salary that is comparable to their male counterpart, and how to protect themselves against sexual violence and discrimination. We need female leaders in this state to represent us and our concerns. Please do not eliminate the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Young Women's Leadership Program.

Thank you.

research the far-reaching impact that the PCSW has on a great number of community agencies working to empower and strengthen women and girls and, therefore, the vast number of women, their male and female children and girls in general for whom your current decision will adversely effect.

Sincerely,



Debra A. Greenwood

President/CEO

The Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc.

Dear Committee Members:

The staff and Board of The Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc. enthusiastically assert its support for The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in their tireless efforts on behalf of the women of Connecticut.

The Center for Women and Families is "dedicated to strengthening women and families and to eliminating violence and abuse through education, intervention, advocacy, and community collaboration."

The work of the PCSW towards empowering young women to seek leadership roles in their communities, establishing and sustaining healthy body images, furthering legislative issue affecting the health and well-being of women in our state, and educating businesses on the prevention and identification of sexual harassment speak directly to our mission and our goal of creating communities where all citizens have the opportunity to thrive.

The PCSW's legislative work in training leaders about the nature and scope of discrimination, serving as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women, promoting consideration of women for governmental positions, and working with state agencies to access programs and practices as they affect women has been an invaluable service to both CWF and our community.

In January 2008, The Center hosted its first Legislative Breakfast with attendees including Teresa Younger, Executive Director of PCSW, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, and representatives from Christopher Shays' Office and from First Selectman, Mayor and superintendent offices for all six towns in our service community. The purpose of this event was to educate our public officials about the devastating effects of sexual and domestic violence on our communities and to enhance our partnerships with policy makers.

One of the highlights of this event was the closing speech delivered by Ms. Younger, which not only exemplified her and PCSW's understanding of women's needs in CT, it confirmed that all facets of the community working collaboratively is paramount to ensure social justice for women and girls.

In the dismal economic times that we now face, the State of Connecticut cannot afford to lose a commission dedicated to supporting vulnerable and underserved populations in our state. As such, we urge you to reconsider your decision and

Testimony of LaResse Harvey
Before the Appropriations Hearing
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

A Better Way Foundation supports the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PSCW) and their efforts to voice women's issues throughout Connecticut and the nation.

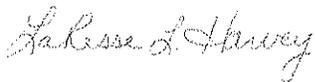
The past 35 years of successful work done by PSCW should be commended. PSCW has fought for equal rights for women that enhanced the quality of life for them and their families.

PSCW's work includes prohibiting sex discrimination in credit transactions; protection of pregnant workers; defining and prohibiting sexual harassment; health insurance plans to cover a minimum of 48 hours' hospital stay for normal childbirth and 96 hours for Caesarian sections; coverage for a minimum of 48 hours following a mastectomy; "Plan B" emergency contraception to victims of rape. The first family and medical leave protections in the country that became the national FMLA Act was developed by PSCW. This is just a few things Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PSCW) has done. Their work is not complete. As long as women are subject to sexual harassment, unequal pay for equal work, sexual and racial discrimination there is a need for PSCW.

As we move forward to the future of our great state, we must consider the importance of this great commission. The value, the work and the progress the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women has done. The women of Connecticut make up 47% of the workforce¹ and 21% of homeownership². Women business owners are growing in Connecticut. Connecticut cannot afford to lose the voice that the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women provides. We must find a means and a way to keep PSCW open and running to continue to be the voice of women across Connecticut and the nation.

A Better Way Foundation will continue our efforts to support PSCW and their efforts to challenge and change history for a better future for us all.

Respectfully,



LaResse L. Harvey, Policy Director
A Better Way Foundation

From: patient_advocate@sbcglobal.net [mailto:patient_advocate@sbcglobal.net]

Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 4:38 PM

To: Rep. Geragosian, John; Senator Harp

Subject: Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian:

I am writing to urge you to ensure the continued funding of the Permanent Commission for the Status of Women (PCSW).

As you may recall, when I served as an Assistant Attorney General, I represented the State in litigation to protect access to a reproductive health care facility in Bridgeport. Later, when I was in private practice, I represented the same clinic, defending it against costly, baseless litigation aimed at closing it down. Since this clinic was the only clinic in that part of the State that served women on Medicaid, it was critical that we keep it open. I could not have succeeded without the support and assistance of the PCSW, which helped organize public and media support for the facility.

Now that I work full-time as an advocate for patients with chronic illnesses, I have come to better know the PCSW's work in the area of health care. Of course, we all know that women in Connecticut would be without insurance coverage of contraceptives and overnight stays for mastectomies were it not for the PCSW. But the PCSW has quietly led the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign, which has worked to promote the health of all women -- including caregivers, the majority of whom are women -- in our State.

Personally, I have benefitted greatly from the PCSW. The PCSW allowed me to believe that I could start my own business and become economically self-sufficient. When I have been at critical junctures in the growth of my business, the PCSW's leadership has always been available to counsel me and assist me to ensure our longevity.

When I think of Connecticut without the PCSW, I picture a very different Connecticut. The leadership of the PCSW -- from Leslie Gabel-Brett to the late, beloved Ruth Pulda to the fabulous Teresa Younger -- have been essential to the character of Connecticut. We are a State in which women are equal and can succeed because of the leadership provided by the PCSW. It saddens me that a woman Governor -- who might not be Governor were it not for the work of the PCSW promoting the inclusion of women in public positions -- could fail to recognize the critical nature of the PCSW's presence. Women can afford to be less afraid to shoot for the stars because the PCSW has always been there with support, encouragement, and important public policy work.

You will, no doubt, hear from many Connecticut citizens about the work of the PCSW because it has played such an integral role in so many of our lives. The Commission's work is legendary, but the Commission's importance goes beyond its many accomplishments. The PCSW makes Connecticut a safe place for women to live, work, succeed, and thrive.

There is a reason the word "permanent" is in the name of the PCSW. For a Commission to be truly independent, and to work on behalf of underrepresented minorities, it must not fear for its continued existence. The Commission's permanence is part of its success. Women (and men) in Connecticut must be able to believe the General Assembly when it creates a "permanent" resource -- a watchdog, a defender of the unpopular, a maverick.

The PCSW's budget will not break the bank, so to speak. But its elimination will leave a void that no amount of tax dollars can replace. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to preserve, protect, and defend the PCSW, on which the women of Connecticut rely for their very well-being. J

Jennifer C. Jaff, Esq.
Executive Director
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Written Testimony of Sally Joughin
Before the Appropriations Committee
In support of Several State Commissions
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

We wish that we did not need special legislation and special support commissions for various groups in America which have significant numbers of members. Unfortunately we still have to focus on the rights and needs of African-Americans, Latinos, and women in our society, to ensure that their voices are heard and that they achieve equal opportunities and equal treatment in all areas of life. I am surprised that the Governor, who belongs to one of these groups, wants to cut funding for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. And the other two commissions, representing minorities that are often disadvantaged and oppressed, are also very important to our state. Each has its own mission, although their goals may be similar.

My own organization, People Against Injustice, has crafted and submitted legislation to create a DOC Advisory Commission, to review the policies and practices of that very large and costly agency, and suggest any improvements that are needed. I mention that because, in our proposal, we have included as commission members a representative from the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and from the African-American and Latino/Puerto Rican Affairs Commissions. Why? Because these 3 commissions look out for the interests of their constituents, some of whom are involved in the criminal justice system - both as inmates and as employees. We recognize their importance.

I hope that the Appropriations Committee can find some areas in which to cut funding where something is no longer needed or has been over-funded. Don't cut so that less advantaged people would not be getting the services or the representation that they need.

As a criminal justice reformer, I can tell you that CT is spending way too much on its prison system, because there are many individuals who should be in programs instead of prison, which would be much less costly. And if savings were then transferred to education, jobs and services in the cities, you would see a lot less people entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

That's how to save money for our state. Apparently the Governor is not aware of this.

Don't let her cut the good programs.

Sally Joughin
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Testimony Supporting the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Appropriations Committee Hearing

Submitted by Gayle Kataja
Co-chair of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign
February 11, 2009

Good afternoon Senator (Toni) Harp, Representative (John) Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Gayle Kataja. I am testifying today in support of the retention of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

I am one of three sisters, the mother of two daughters, a registered nurse and co-chair of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign. The CWHC began under the auspices of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women about 15 years ago. It is comprised of agencies and persons interested in promoting the agenda of women's health in CT. We also provide an education and information to a variety of audiences to further the agenda of women's health.

I would like to highlight just a few of our successes over the past several years:

- We made available prescription contraception coverage under group and individual health insurance plans
- Thanks to CWHC, Plan B is now available to all women in need in CT
- We successfully integrated the diagnosis of breast and cervical cancer with treatment
- We worked to achieve accessibility to gynecological services to women with disabilities
- CWHC stopped the so called "drive by mastectomies"
- And thanks in part to the CWHC, "Ruth's Bill" which provides insurance coverage to help pay for wigs for women undergoing chemotherapy is available to those needing it

There are approximately 473,000 people age 65 or older in Ct and 60% of persons (over 277,000) are women. 35,000 of the 40,000 people on ConnPace are women. Less than one quarter of women over 65 receive pensions compared to one third of men. The National Women's Law Center Study revealed that CT of the only state in New England that does not prohibit gender rating for health insurance (there is a 4-42% disparity in cost depending on the age of the women). We have learned that the majority of bankruptcies caused by unpaid medical bills are by women. Finally, I cannot leave here today without reminding you that women still earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

Our work is far from done and desperately needs to continue. It needs to continue to eliminate disparities based on gender, race and ethnicity. I urge you to retain and support the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the other human rights commissions. Thank you.



Wider Opportunities for Women

**Written Testimony of
Wider Opportunities for Women
Before the Appropriations Committee
Supporting the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in support of preserving the unique mission of and continuing the vital work of the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. This dynamic organization has achieved numerous successes on behalf of Connecticut women, women who contribute to the state's coffers and women who contribute to the stability of families, communities and work forces. WOW encourages Connecticut lawmakers to continue to fully fund the work of the PCSW as the PCSW has proven its ability to produce data-driven results from expanding public awareness of what it takes for Connecticut families to make ends meet to forward-thinking legislative initiatives that facilitate the economic security, health and well-being of women and their families.

It has been WOW's distinct honor to work in partnership with the PCSW for many years as we built and continue to enhance the body of knowledge known as the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project. This effort has included the production of a Self-Sufficiency Standard for the state and contributions to the release of the PCSW's report, "Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands." More recently WOW and the PCSW have collectively embarked on a mission, the Elder Economic Security Initiative, to determine the baseline needs of Connecticut's seniors to determine the income levels which would allow seniors to age in place with economic security for themselves and to maintain the dignity they deserve. The new Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index for the Five Connecticut will be released by PCSW, in partnership with WOW, in early March. Without the PCSW in Connecticut, WOW would lose an invaluable partner in this effort. The testimony that follows outlines our support and rationale for maintaining in its current form and function, the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

For more than 40 years, WOW has been a dynamic organization, seeking to improve the economic well-being of women and girls through advocacy, organizing, coalition-building, training, and public awareness activities. WOW has and continues to work throughout the country and in Washington, D.C. fighting for programs and resources to prepare women and girls for jobs that will support their families and them. For example, WOW developed the country's first women's employment resource center women and nurtured similar centers around the U.S. WOW helped define —non-traditional occupations (NTOs) for women, advocated for federal laws to increase women's participation in NTOs by giving women the skills to earn high wages and

economic security and undertook demonstration projects around the country. WOW demonstrates the interconnectedness of issues from child care, reproductive health and welfare policies to tax policies, workforce and economic development. From teen-focused programs like the Connections to Career series to those assessing the economic impact of long-term care for seniors, WOW addresses issues affecting women and their families today—within and across generations—work that compliments and contributes to the work of the PCSW.

WOW applauds the work of the PCSW over its 35-year history, a history marked with momentous victories working in partnership with the state legislature including the first family and medical leave protections and more recent work on adequately compensating Connecticut's child care workers. The PCSW team has testified on over 75 bills before this legislative body, providing expert testimony to lawmakers at no additional cost to the state. By proving training services to state employees at no cost, the PCSW instills necessary learning including sexual harassment awareness and prevention training and allows the state to realize savings by not having to let contracts for this work.

The PCSW's work does not stop at the doors to capitol. The PCSW reaches across the state to provide training services including a young women's leadership program, pre-apprenticeship training and other training for women who work in the trades. Indicative of the PCSW's willingness to bring like-minded and disparate mindsets to the table, the commission has led or participated in over 25 coalitions and 12 task forces in the last year alone. These efforts to coalesce partners, to produce consensus and find solutions comes at much less than its market value by having the PCSW engaged. The expense to the state in the absence of a PCSW extend well beyond the lack of cohesiveness engendered among advocates without coalitions to the price of having policy work produced at a fee by outside providers or the stunted leadership skills of the next generation without access to the commission's leadership program or the cost to the state's coffers of revenues lost when women are not paid fairly in the workplace.

WOW is proud to be numbered among the many partners of the PCSW. As mentioned, WOW leads the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project in 37 states and the District of Columbia. WOW's new Elder Economic Security Initiative assists policymakers, advocates, and providers in twelve states develop programs so seniors may age in place with dignity and economic security. The PCSW in Connecticut is a valued partner in both efforts. Through these projects WOW and our partners are helping to change the public dialogue from one of poverty to one of economic security at the national level and in state legislatures. In this instance, the PCSW's continued existence insures state lawmakers, advocates and voters in Connecticut will have access to the most current data, policies and best practices from across the nation—all flowing through the analytical lens offered to CT opinion-makers, policy-makers, practitioners and residents by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. On more than one occasion the work of the PCSW has made Connecticut the model for the nation including the commission's pre-apprenticeship training program.

I must mention that many of our state partners find themselves somewhat envious of Connecticut as they have no government entities which have as their mission the identification of issues affecting the status of women and the provision of leadership and information to policy-makers and the public in order to improve the status of women. Without a centralized repository of research, without a designated liaison to their legislative bodies, without an entity

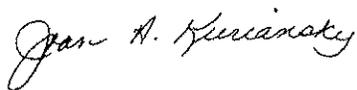
charged with the oversight, coordination and assessment of programs and practices in state agencies as they affect women, our colleagues in many other states can only wish for the resource you have here in the CT PCSW. The foresight of your forbearers in creating the PCSW certainly underscores the leadership Connecticut has offered so many times dating to an era before our nation existed. Let not that foresight or that leadership be lost today.

WOW's board of directors, staff and partner organizations across the country stand with the PCSW. We know that policy-makers face a strained budget and must look for ways to reduce expenses. However, eliminating the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women presents a cost to the families of Connecticut that they simply cannot afford, a cost which will be borne out across generations from this day forward, and may well mark the end of significant gains for women in this state. Without the PCSW who will speak for your constituents? For women in the workforce? For families who face the struggles of caring for children and aging parents? For women who are denied necessary health care or face exponentially increasing health insurance costs? For families who depend on two incomes to make ends meet but lack access to quality benefits such as time to attend parent-teacher conferences or to take children or parents to medical appointments? For struggling women laid off in the current economic crisis but ineligible for unemployment insurance? Who will rally for them and present you with policy options that ease the burden on Connecticut families and contribute to a higher standard of living in this state? Who, without the PCSW?

We respect the need to balance the state's budget, but we request that you not do so by eliminating such a respected and vigilant entity as the PCSW. We ask that you honor the permanent nature of the commission and the ongoing need for its work in economic and financial security, health and safety, and anti-discrimination efforts by restating your support and by fully funding the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about our work with the PCSW, please contact us as directed below. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Humbly submitted this day, February 11th, in the year, 2009, by,



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Testimony of Marie Lausch

Before the Appropriations Hearing

In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Rep. Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Marie Lausch and I am here today to speak about a matter of great importance to Connecticut voters, Governor Rell's proposal to slash services to State residents that need them most; our women and children. I speak from personal experience, as does every individual that has had to cinch in his or her financial belt during these declining economic times. I am also the President of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 222, a group of over 2200 Connecticut Municipal and Board of Ed. members.

There is no doubt that the economy is bad, and may get much worse. This is not a time to cut services to our most disenfranchised citizens, but a time to shore them up. While it is true that women have made great strides since gaining the vote in 1920, their earning power is still at only 78% of a man's, a shameful statistic in these times. When the chips are down, it is the earners at the bottom of the economic scale that suffer most. These are our women and children.

Recently, our Union had gotten involved with the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women as we waged a tough battle with our Wallingford Paraeducators. This hard working group (of mainly women) came nowhere near the pay scale of the Janitors (who were mainly men) in the same town, but they are expected to provide expert care, and continued certifications to work with the children of Wallingford. When they asked for healthcare coverage, their Superintendent told them "You should go on your husbands' insurance." Surely this chauvinistic attitude could not go unchallenged. When the members of the U.E. looked for help, we turned to the PCSW. Not only did we find facts and figures on their website extremely informative, but they became our champion of the uninsured. We held rallies in the center of Town. The PCSW passed the word, and they marched with us. During a public forum attended by many Wallingford residents, Teresa Younger gave a stirring speech on the costs and negative effects of female workers without healthcare. We are convinced that this hearing helped turn the tide of public opinion, informed Wallingford voters, and enabled our Paraeducators to secure for the first time ever, the ability to buy into Wallingford's health insurance. It is true that our members have to pay 50% of the cost of the insurance package. I am sure any one of them would be glad to trade their insurance for the Governor's, but we are making progress.

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women also serves as a watchdog agency for our State, providing training and information on a variety of topics that directly impact women; we need them to be our vanguard in advancing women's rights.

I agree that we must find ways to cut costs and seek economic alternatives here in our State, but I am furious to hear that when the going gets tough, the tough go after the ones they think least likely to fight back.

I urge Governor Rell, and all our Legislators to find alternatives. What cuts are being made in your offices, and to your budgets and staffing? So my advise to our esteemed governing bodies is; turn

down the heat, turn off the lights, cut down on trips and sabbaticals, close down the Governor's Mansion, but DO NOT leave the people that need help the most adrift. In the words of Madeline K. Albright, our esteemed former Secretary of State, "There is a special place in hell for women who do not help other women."

Sincerely,

Marie C. Lausch
President, U.E. Local 222
(860) 558-1316
mclausch@comcast.net



February 10, 2009

Senator Toni Harp
Legislative Office Building
Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Harp,

I am writing in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). I was disheartened to hear that Governor Rell proposed to eliminate PCSW after its long history of successes in its quest to provide equal rights for women in Connecticut. PCSW is also crucial in the fight against human trafficking in the State of Connecticut and an essential partner in the mission of the Barnaba Institute.

The mission of the Barnaba Institute is to raise awareness about human trafficking as it pertains to sexual exploitation through education and media; to provide professional training courses on how to identify human trafficking victims and to provide support, guidance and care to sexually exploited and trafficked youth and adults.

The President, Frank N. Barnaba, helped form the Barnaba Institute because he felt there was a growing need for the education of professionals, law enforcement, students and nonprofits on human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Mr. Barnaba has 26 years of experience working against commercial sexual exploitation with the Paul & Lisa Program, Inc., a non-profit based in Connecticut that he founded in 1980.

The PCSW provides an important State platform for anti-trafficking organizations, professionals and intellectuals to come together periodically throughout the year to educate and develop policy changes to better fight human trafficking and helps its victims.

It would be a horrible mistake to eliminate the PCSW and I sincerely feel that it would be a loss to not only the Barnaba Institute, but to women throughout Connecticut trying to stay afloat and care for their families in this difficult economic time.

Sincerely,

Alexis Taylor Lisco

Executive Director
The Barnaba Institute

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The Barnaba Institute is a registered 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible as provided by law.



Advocates for Workplace Fairness

Wayne N. Outten
Anne Golden
Adam T. Klein
Laurence S. Moy
Gary Phelan
Kathleen Peratis
Piper Hoffman
Justin M. Swartz
Jack A. Raisner
Wendi S. Lazar

Allegra L. Fishel
Lewis M. Steel
Nantiya Ruan
Deborah L. McKenna
René S. Roupinian
Julia Griffin Murphy

Rachel M. Bien
Katherine Blostein
Molly Brooks
Cara E. Greene
Carmelyn P. Malalis
Stephanie M. Marnin
Tammy Marzigliano
Ossai Miazad
Linda A. Neilan
Tara Lai Quinlan
Lauren Schwartzreich

February 11, 2009

Senator Toni Harp
Representative John Geragosian
Appropriation Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106

Public Testimony of Deborah L. McKenna

My name is Deborah McKenna. I am an attorney at Outten & Golden, LLP in Stamford and a resident of Milford, CT. I have been in practice since 1996, and my work has always focused on employee rights and women's issues. I first met Leslie Brett, the PCSW's former Executive Director during law school, when I was an intern at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund and later, when she taught my "Women and The Law" class at UCONN. That was also my first opportunity to learn about the PCSW and the important service it provides to all of the citizens of Connecticut.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments, I am unable to attend today's Appropriations Committee in person. However, I wanted to share my thoughts with this committee, as I have had a unique opportunity to represent the PCSW on a few matters over the past years and have witnessed first hand the vital function this agency serves for Connecticut.

Prior to my tenure with Outten & Golden, LLP, I was a partner at Livingston, Adler, Pulda, Meiklejohn & Kelly, PC in Hartford. I am sure many of you knew Ruth Pulda, one of my former law partners, mentor and friend. In 1997, Ruth and I were working with a coalition of women's groups in connection with issues related to the proposed Avon Surgery Center. As some of you may recall, a group of hospitals in central Connecticut - including UCONN's John Dempsey Medical Center, St. Francis Hospital, Hartford Hospital and New Britain General Hospital had proposed to open a surgery center to serve patients in Avon. Despite the fact that one of the partners in this venture was a state institution, St. Francis sought to enforce the Catholic directives on the center - which in the groups' opinion meant that the medical care that could be provide to female patients would be restricted in ways that the care provided to male

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patients would not be. Since the proposal first had to be approved by the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA), which was required to hold public hearings on the proposal, there was an opportunity for us to get involved. The coalition and the PCSW sought legal status to intervene in the proceedings, in order to further investigate the impact this center would potentially have on women's health care in the state. OHCA recognized PCSW's unique mandate with regard to women's issues and its role as a state agency of sorts and granted PCSW's request. During those proceedings, PCSW was able to raise many issues related to how women's health care would be provided at the proposed facility and make its voice heard. This was the first of a number of similar proceedings and issues that developed with regard to women's health care in the 1990s and early 2000s.

In 2005, PCSW learned that Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, CT had filed paperwork with OHCA requesting permission to close its ob/gyn clinic. This clinic had a long history of providing necessary care to many women in Southeastern Connecticut, particularly those who were low income. Again, through PCSW's status as a state agency, we were able to achieve intervener status in the public hearing before OHCA. The hearing took place at Mitchell College, on a snowy day in March 2005, before a room of community leaders, hospital officials, L & M employees and patients. At the time, Ruth, Leslie and I had agreed that I would be lead counsel at the hearing. Having been through the process before, we expected that we would be granted some time at the end of the proceedings to pose our questions and make concerns known. However, once OHCA convened the hearing, it became clear that the PCSW was going to be permitted a much larger and more meaningful role – with OHCA permitting us to do the initial cross-examination of the hospital executives. I think that this was direct result of the reputation that the PCSW had developed as an advocate on these issues and in deference to its legislative mandate. In the end, OHCA denied the Hospital's proposal – in large part because it had not shown sufficient evidence that it had a plan to ensure adequate and continuity of health care for women in this area. Had the PCSW not been there – I do not know that the issues would have come across so clearly and so effectively.

The stories detailed above are just a few of the many examples of the important functions of the PCSW. While there are other effective women's organizations in Connecticut, the unique mandate of the PCSW gives it the power, access and ability to expose issues of discrimination and fight against discrimination in a way that no other organization can. The PCSW is also able to give voice to women in the state who are often without a voice – the low income or immigrant women, young women and old women, who may have difficulty having their voices heard. In these challenging financial times, these are the members of our citizenry who are most at risk for discriminatory treatment and who need an effective advocate.

If the proposal to close this agency is accepted, it will be a dark day for women's rights in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time.

Deborah L. McKenna
Deborah L. McKenna

Testimony of Shon Missouri
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on bill

My name is Shon Missouri, and I am a member of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. I am here to testify in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

In 2004, I was a single parent, earning minimum wage, going from job to job, not really satisfied with what I was doing or where my life was going. I was finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet as a single parent. Then I found out about the pre-apprenticeship program that the PCSW ran, and I leapt at this opportunity.

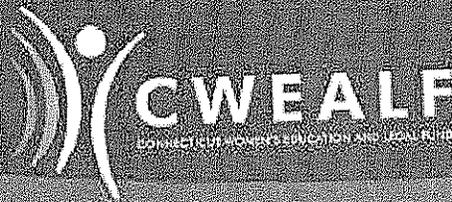
I realized very early on how fortunate I was. PCSW's training program prepared me for a career in the skilled trades. I was actually educated in the world of construction. I wasn't just given a job, I was given the skills to earn a living wage. I had right people and guidance during my training. This wasn't a free ride, I had to work extremely hard to get into an apprenticeship program.

Not only did I know exactly what I was getting into, a career with equal pay, health insurance, and retirement benefits, job security. I had the confidence to stand by those with more experience and to learn from them. I started work as a painter's apprentice within days of graduating from PCSW's pre-apprenticeship program, and have worked steadily ever since. I will gain journey status within the next 6 months.

How has this changed my life? Because of the PCSW....

- I have job security.
- I earn a livable wage.
- I have medical and dental benefits.
- I have retirement benefits.
- I am extremely proud of my career.
- I am more confident in myself and my abilities.
- My children will grow up in a household that shows them security.
- My children will see by example that women can do anything.

What I am basically trying to say, is getting rid of the PCSW would totally be disrespectful to the women who need something to strive and believe in, because I know having had the opportunity to have worked with PCSW made me a better person.



Advocating for women's rights
and opportunities in Connecticut

February 11, 2009

Good evening. My name is Alice Pritchard, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF). CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. For 35 years, CWEALF has worked alongside the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) to create greater awareness about the issues affecting the status of women of Connecticut and to stand up on their behalf.

I am here today to urge your support for the PCSW and to oppose its elimination.

Since its establishment in 1973, PCSW has served as a critical channel in bringing the voices of women to State government by providing information, research and analysis to elected officials and the general public about all matters concerning the status of Connecticut women.

The Commission convenes numerous workgroups on women's issues such as the Connecticut Women Health's Campaign (CWHC), a statewide group of experts and advocates committed to improving healthcare for women and girls, and the Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP), a project to promote awareness and empower young women to become leaders. PCSW has also convened coalitions including the CT Women's Agenda, an open forum for all women's organizations and the Congressional District Advisory Councils, a regional coalition to enhance women's access and input to state government. The Commission has also held public hearings throughout the year, giving women of Connecticut a great opportunity to speak to legislators and elected officials to voice out their concerns and needs regarding their economic and financial security.

The PCSW was instrumental in bringing Connecticut the Self-Sufficiency Standard, which calculates how much money working adults need to meet their basic needs without subsidies of any kind, which is specific to our state and makes policy recommendations on workforce development issues, education and job training and public assistance resources. This document has helped legislators and public officials understand the real costs of raising families in Connecticut. Through this understanding, we are able to create programs which better meet the needs of women and their families.

By providing information to state agencies, it saves the state money and improves the performance of these agencies. An example of such service is the sexual harassment training and technical assistance which the Commission has provided state employees and agencies, saving the State government \$400,000. The reduction of sexual harassment complaints also saves state dollars on unnecessary litigation in the future.

The elimination of groups such as the PCSW is a major step backwards in the progress of women's issues in the State. In this difficult economic climate, though we should act swiftly, we must not be so quick to provide a remedy that will further harm the most vulnerable of our population. The elimination of the Commission may seem to help alleviate the financial strain the State is facing in the short term, but the State government will ultimately be doing its citizens a great disservice. It will silence the voices of women and their families in a time when more than ever, their needs and concerns must be heard. By eliminating such an invaluable resource, the State risks undoing the strides in the progress of women's rights and thus the progress of the State and its citizens.

Thank you.

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Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, Appropriations Committee, February 11, 2009

- Officers: Rev. Maria LaSala, Chair; Kay J. Maxwell, Vice Chair; Deborah Freedman, Secretary; Amelia Renkert-Thommas, I.D., Treasurer; Nancy Rosen, Assistant Treasurer

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President of CPC, Judy Tabar

Thank you, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Gretchen Raffa. I'm from New Britain CT, and I am also here representing Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, which would like to add its voice to those urging preservation of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). For 35 years, as long as I have been alive, the PCSW has been a permanent voice in our government advocating for the most urgent issues facing women. I am proud to live in a State committed to advancing the status of women.

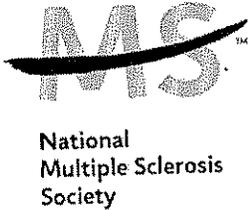
For me, the PCSW is more than a state commission; it is where I started my professional journey 11 years ago, working at PCSW under a Non-Traditional Employment for Women Grant. Fresh out of UConn with my Women's Studies degree, I was ecstatic to work with the PCSW and to learn first hand the important role it plays in closing the gap on gender inequality in our state.

Today, in my role as Community Organizer for Planned Parenthood of CT, I have a new relationship and admiration for the PCSW as a strong, necessary and ever present voice in promoting reproductive justice. I am proud and grateful to have worked with the PCSW in 2007 to pass the Compassionate Care for Rape Victims legislation to ensure that women who have survived sexual assault have access to emergency contraception in all Connecticut hospitals.

Our state has been a national leader on reproductive rights and the PCSW has played a crucial role in advocating to improve health care access for women and girls including access to a full range of reproductive health services at hospitals considering merger or affiliation with another institution. It has been the PCSW that, because of its legislative mandate, has been granted the legal status to intervene in several of these situations. As a result, full reproductive health services at institutions like Sharon Hospital have been preserved.

Currently 21.1% of female-headed families in CT live below the poverty line, and that number will rise as the crisis escalates. More women will lack access to affordable healthcare and insurance, good jobs, an adequate paycheck, and affordable housing. The struggles women face today are real, often unavoidable and debilitating because of the discrimination we still face. The PCSW is the voice for all women in Connecticut. Without it, the most vulnerable population of women may be silenced.

As long as women in Connecticut are being oppressed based on their gender, the work of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women is not done. I urge you to fully fund the PCSW so that they can continue to promote and advocate for the best policies and laws that directly impact women and their families. I am just one Connecticut woman who is here to say that I deserve full equality in our state and I am thankful that throughout my life the PCSW has been fighting on my behalf.



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**Testimony in support of
The Commission on Aging and
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing, February 11, 2009**

Senator Harp, Representative Candelaria, Senator Debicella, Representative Hetherington, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee and the Legislative Subcommittee,

My name is Susan Raimondo and I am the Senior Director of Advocacy and Programs for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Connecticut Chapter. I am also the family care giver representative to the CT Long Term Care Advisory Council and I serve on the Money Follows the Person Steering Committee. I have been involved in advocacy, providing services and in policy development assisting elders and persons with disabilities for over 25 years in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about our concerns regarding the proposed elimination of the Commission on Aging and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has strong partnerships with the Commission on Aging and with the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and its affiliate, the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign.

These two Commissions are an essential part of the non-partisan programs that are working to advocate and support the needs of Connecticut's elders and women. Although these two commissions' titles indicate that they are helping women and elders, in reality their superb work reaches way beyond the scope of their title.

Both agencies are independent, yet provide robust leadership in the community. Their work on issues around economic security, workforce development, long term care, health care and their timely research and initiatives to save money are crucial given the horrific budget challenges that our state faces. The Commission on Aging and the PCSW operate with small budgets, maximize the use of volunteers, research and facilitate understanding of many of our state's challenges all while developing outstanding community partnerships which can help to broker important relationships that play a role in helping to solve many of our state's problems.

These two commissions not only provide the leadership, but actually get the work done! Examples include:

- The Commission on Aging (CoA) improves access to information for older adults, persons with disabilities, families and caregivers by working with OPM to create and now maintain the state's Long-Term Care web site. The web site received over 80,000 visits last year alone (www.ct.gov/longtermcare).
- CoA leads efforts to mandate and fund the state's first comprehensive Long-Term Care Needs Assessment, a roadmap to planning for the future needs in our state.
- CoA work has been successful in bridging across multiple generations by working with schools statewide to link them with Earth's Elders, a FREE unique school curriculum that connects students with older adults in their communities.
- The CT Women's Health Campaign and PCSW are responsible for significant changes in access to and provision of health care services for women in our state through legislation and partnerships that have:
 - Improved access to gynecological health care services for women of all ages who are living with disabilities.
 - Banned the use of "drive-through" childbirths, Caesarian sections, and mastectomies.
- PCSW championed the rights of all workers by creating legislation that led to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.
- The Commission on Aging and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women have provided support that lead to the successful passage of the CT Home Care Program for Disabled Adults which is serving people with degenerative neurological conditions who are between the ages of 18 and 64. This provides an alternative to expensive nursing home care. The CHCPDA program can save the state \$2,055,576 each year.
- The two commissions also actively working on ways to increase savings in our state budget as well as working to find new ways to maximize existing and develop new revenue sources.

We urge the Appropriations Committee to reinstate funding for these two essential commissions which provide much greater savings than the expense of their small budgets. In these times of economic crisis, it seems very foolish to eliminate the Commission on Aging and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Testimony of Cheryl Sharp- CHRO

Good evening legislators, I am Cheryl Sharp, a life time Connecticut resident, a Civil Rights Attorney employed by the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities for the past 15 years, and a lifetime civil and human rights advocate, and I am here as a concerned citizen in support of the African American Affairs Commission.

The issues and concerns of African Americans should be considered in all aspects of Connecticut's legislative and governing processes. The African American Affairs Commission serves a vital function, and is operating to identify and address the critical educational, health care, environmental, criminal justice, juvenile justice, family and child welfare, business and economic development, housing and civil rights needs of its constituents. In short, the agency is the legislative voice for African Americans in many aspects of our lives. The role of this Commission is always vital to establishing equality among the citizens of Connecticut—and has become more necessary in recent years due to the layoffs of state employees in 2003 that resulted in the dismantling of the Education and Outreach Department of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities has been stripped to its core and needs the work of the African American Affairs Commission and Commissions like it to support, supplement and assist the state in rooting out discrimination and preserving civil and human rights. Thus, the work of this Commission and Commissions like it is not duplicative. This Commission and Commissions like it do not represent the bloat in state government. To the contrary, this Commission and Commissions like it provide essential services that we cannot afford to do without.

The Executive Branch's position, as articulated by the Governor, is that during good economic times Commissions such as the African American Affairs Commission serve a purpose, but during tough economic times, we can't afford this Commission or the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission or the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women or 25% of the already understaffed Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities—the Waterbury and Norwich Regional Offices of the Commission, or the Asian Affairs Commission or the Commission on Aging. This position is short sighted, the fallout from the elimination of this Commission and Commissions like it will be too great, the despair of the Connecticut citizens affected will run too deep, and the cost of failing to honor, respect and protect diversity, civil and human rights and equality will be insurmountable.

The mission of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut. If this Commission and Commissions like it are eliminated there will be no one available to perform their vital functions, no agency of state government to adequately serve their clients, no federal equivalent to pick up the slack. Equally as alarming, the proposed budget while calling for the elimination of this Commission and others like it, also calls for the elimination of 25% of the staff of the state's civil rights agency—so how will citizens of Connecticut be served? This has to be as important to each legislator as it is to each of his or her affected constituents-- equality, civil rights and equal opportunity are woven into the fabric of our great state, and now when our state faces such great challenges, is not the time to abandon our progressive government and diminish our hope for equality in the state with the oldest Civil Rights Agency of its kind. Thank you.

Date: February 11, 2008

From: NAWBO-CT

RE: Opposing the elimination of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

Please accept this written testimony, on behalf of our membership, opposing the elimination of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). As not only leaders of the National Association of Women Business Owners, Connecticut Chapter (NAWBO-CT), but also business owners ourselves, please understand that we are unable to devote a full day to join you in person to deliver oral testimony.

The Commission is our voice in Connecticut State Government. Every couple years, NAWBO-CT and the Commission join forces to survey women business owners to help define our legislative goals and needs for the upcoming session. The last two rounds of research directed NAWBO-CT and a coalition of other women's groups to continue to focus their attention on increasing access to affordable, quality health care throughout the State.

PCSW convenes several critical statewide coalitions, including the *Women in the Trades Network* to increase opportunities for women in the skilled trades and technical careers, the *Young Women's Leadership Program* which inspires and empowers young women aged 18-35 to emerge as leaders in business, government and community, and the *CT Women's Health Campaign*, a group of experts and advocates committed to improving health care for women and girls.

Planned for 2009 is a joint Conference for Women Business Owners, a day for all women businesses to learn from the experts, network amongst each other and learn how to get business from the State and Federal government. Expanding upon the scope of the Commission's highly successful Connecticut Women Entrepreneurs' Day which drew hundreds of women owned businesses and dozens of contractors, the new format will focus on economic growth in a challenging economy. This joint effort will undoubtedly benefit of all parties and ultimately benefit the State in additional taxes.

PCSW is an important commitment from the legislature to the women owned businesses of this State. If you want us to continue to help get people off welfare, if you want us to keep growing at twice the rate of all business and if you want us to stay in this State to keep paying our taxes here, then this Commission has to remain in operation to be our resource and a symbol of the State's commitment to our success and yours.

To eliminate PCSW, the only state agency whose sole purpose includes providing leadership, information and education to policy makers and the public to improve the economic, health, and political well-being and status of women and girls, **would send the message that State government neither needs nor wants a reliable source of unbiased, well researched information designed to help them make good public policy decisions.**

NAWBO propels women business owners into economic, social and political power. The National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) is the voice of America's 10.6

million women-owned businesses and unifies more than 29,000 women in over 80 chapters nationally and in over forty nations worldwide. Dedicated to advancing, educating, mentoring and empowering women business owners, NAWBO-CT represents the over 75,000 women owned businesses in the State of Connecticut.

Some National WBO Stats to Note:

- ***The number of women-owned businesses continues to grow at twice the rate of all U.S. firms and these businesses' economic influence is increasing at speeds exceeding the national average.***
- Women accounted for more than 51 percent of the United States population and 47 percent of the American labor force, according to the most recent National statistics (2004).
- As of 2006, there are an estimated 10.4 million privately-held businesses in which a woman or women owns at least 50 percent of the company. Among them, 7.7 million are majority-owned.
- 12.8 million people are employed by the 10.4 million women- and equally-owned firms.
- \$1.9 trillion in sales were generated by the 10.4 million women- and equally-owned firms.
- Between 1997 and 2006, the number of majority (51% or more) women-owned firms grew by nearly two times the rate of all U.S. privately-held firms.

Above facts as published in *Key Facts About Women Business Owners and their Enterprises—July 2007*, by The National Women's Business Council.

Some Connecticut WBO Stats to Note, Based on the Most Recent PCSW / NAWBO-CT Survey (2006; Next survey planned for 2009), survey respondents are:

- **Established women owned businesses with National scope**
- **76% have been in business for six years or more**
 - 55% have been in business for ten years or more
- **64% of women business owners employ up to five**
 - 85% have up to ten employees
- **74% of respondents do business nationally/regionally**
 - 12% of respondents do business internationally
- **21% of women business owners generate sales in excess of \$1,000,000 annually**
 - 28% generate sales between \$250,000 and \$1 million annually
 - 51% generate sales up to \$250,000 annually
- **100% of the women surveyed own 50% or more of their business**
 - 81% of women have 75%-100% ownership

Since established in 1973, PCSW has brought the voices of women and girls to State government. Their mission has been, and continues to be, providing leadership and information to policy makers and the public in order to improve the status of women and girls.

PCSW has a 35-year history and an honorable record as one of the most successful and respected commissions for women in the country. Creation of PCSW was part of a national effort to address discrimination against women and girls.

In order to remain competitive in a global economy, Connecticut needs PCSW to continue to provide high quality services and information about the status of women to policy makers and members of the general public.

It is hard to believe that after such remarkable successes PCSW is even considered for elimination. PCSW has played such an important role in the state.

On behalf of all girls, women, and especially the women business owners in the state,
we implore you: PCSW must not be eliminated.

Sincerely,

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**Testimony of Carol Virostek
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Carol Virostek. I live at 20 Jeffrey Lane in Berlin. Thank you for this opportunity to address you today and to express my total opposition to the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. Just as her predecessor did in his 2003 budget, Governor Rell seems to have targeted those agencies serving the most vulnerable people of our state: in this case, women and girls who are victims of discrimination, bullying, sexual assault, and questionable medical practices and employment policies. I can appreciate the difficulty of the task you have before you of fairly appropriating our limited state resources in these dire economic times. But because of these times, it is even more important to reflect on how and why the PCSW is unique among the other state agencies - and why its \$1.1M annual allotment is that rare investment whose value has actually increased over time.

I have spent my adult life both as an educator and as a volunteer for local and national service and advocacy organizations, whose missions to promote equity, economic security, child care, health and affordable housing have all been dramatically advanced by the work of the PCSW. While some organizations do research, some provide social services, and others advocate for legislation, not one has the power to effect positive societal change the way PCSW can. One of its greatest strengths is in coalition building - bringing together dozens of organizations representing a host of women's issues. PCSW is the hub. It derives data from its partners and translates those data into an effective legislative agenda. It educates our legislators

and the public at large on issues that otherwise might have gone under the radar - bullying in schools and the workplace, incidents of sexual harassment and racial discrimination on a college campus, the disparity in wages between men and women doing the same job, unconscionable medical practices such as drive-through mastectomies. And therein lies the difference, ladies and gentlemen. When a service organization or nonprofit speaks out, we can only hope that our legislators will listen. When the PCSW becomes involved as a resource for our lawmakers and government officials, legislation is enacted. And it is only through the passage of law that injustices can be rectified, unlawful practices forbidden and penalized.

But there's more. The free sexual harassment prevention training offered to all state agencies that helps to change the culture of that agency or organization. The referrals to crisis centers of callers who are victims of domestic violence. The guardian angels for victims of human trafficking. PCSW staffers are in the fray - as well as in the Capitol.

Please don't take away this unparalleled advocate for women's health, safety, and financial security that has worked tirelessly and successfully for 35 years. When the PCSW ensures the protection of the rights of women, it ensures positive outcomes and a better life for their families and communities - the citizens of our state. It's what government is obliged to do. To that end, the PCSW is essential.

Written Testimony of Julia Wayner
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). As you go forward in these trying economic times, I implore you to maintain the state's focus on women, and issues relevant to women. I can not stress enough how important it is for the PCSW to remain intact and active despite the budgetary constraints you now face.

One to the many gems that the PCSW provides is the Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP). As a member of the YWLP I have had the distinct privilege to meet other young women within the Connecticut area from different professional backgrounds. The opportunity not only to network, but also to share experiences has been invaluable to my personal growth. Many of the issues that we as women face can be isolating and demoralizing when there is no support, but thanks to the YWLP a strong network of like minded women meet regularly sharing experiences and helping one another. The YWLP is vital to ensuring the empowerment of today's and tomorrow's Connecticut leaders.

Recently some have said that we don't need a commission on women because we have a female governor, treasurer, secretary of state and comptroller so women have reached equality. To make the conclusion that just because some women have succeeded in public office means that we have reached true equality is outlandish. I work in engineering and information technology- both are fields that are still very male dominated and don't even come close to the equal representation of men and women. Because of working in a male dominated field I worry about being "mommy tracked", or not being able to advance my career because managers view women with children as somehow less committed than men with families. Until we have reached equality in the professional arena we can't even begin to claim that we have reached true equality.

In addition to advocating for young women and the issues I previously mentioned, the

PCSW provides the state with a cost savings. The PCSW provides the state with free sexual harassment awareness and prevention training saving the state an estimated \$200,000 plus. Without the PCSW the state would be forced to hire consultants to administer the training at \$400 to \$600 per session. The consultants providing the training have a vested interest in the service as opposed to the genuine interest that the staff from the PCSW exhibits lending a higher level of quality to the training. Having established a tangible dollar benefit that PCSW provides to the state, we should also consider the intentions behind the formation of the PCSW.

When the PCSW was formed in 1973 by the General Assembly, it was not simply called, the "commission on the status of women", it was specifically named the *Permanent* Commission on the Status of Women. The word "permanent" is key. The mission of the PCSW is evolutionary in nature; it does not have a definitive end for there is no quintessential goal that defines its lifespan. The PCSW's purpose is to represent the needs and voices of **over half** of the state's population on the priority issues that will continue to evolve in nature throughout the coming years.

Today, you may be surprised to learn that women still only earn 78 cents on the dollar in comparison with their male counterparts. You may also be astonished to learn that female dominated professions, such as childcare, yield a sufficiently lower income level leaving women within these professions near poverty.

The message is clear, we need action, we need focus, and we need the PCSW to help support those causes new and old that left unsupported will hinder the growth of 51% of this state's population. We need the PCSW to continue championing women's issues so that women's issues remain in the forefront.

We need you, as legislators, to support this commission by ensuring that it remains fully funded. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Micro Enterprise Resource Group
"THE VOICE OF MICRO ENTERPRISE IN CONNECTICUT"

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Testimony of

Kay Wilson

The Micro Enterprise Resource Group (MERG)

Before the
Appropriations Committee

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

In Support of The Permanent commission on the Status of Women

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on the above referenced bills on behalf of the Micro Enterprise Resource Group (MERG).

MERG's mission is to advocate for and promote the interests of micro enterprise in Connecticut. We represent approximately 320,000 Connecticut micro businesses, those employing fewer than ten people. There are 123,000 women-owned businesses in Connecticut, so MERG relies heavily on the hard work of the PCSW to accomplish our shared goals. PCSW is mandated to serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups, so their Women Owned Business Initiative includes collaboration with MERG. The bill-tracking they provide our members is crucial for us to fulfill our mission.

In addition to the support PCSW provides MERG, their Young Women's Leadership Program inspires and empowers young women aged 18-35 to emerge as leaders in business, government and the community. The Women in the Trades Network increases opportunities for women in the skilled trades and technical careers. Their Talent Bank contains the names and résumés of more than 450 highly qualified women for consideration for appointment to state boards and commissions. All of these programs work to further strengthen the economic independence of women in our state. Without them, women are less likely to be fully employed and have health insurance, so their health care bills go to the state. They are also far more likely to rely heavily on assistance and unemployment, which cost the state much more to sustain. The state has a genuine financial incentive to insure that PCSW be allowed to continue its mission.

We recognize a pressing need for the legislature to cut expenditures, but we strongly urge the committee to preserve the PCSW in its current capacity. We believe that it is precisely this poor economic climate that can be most devastating to women, and we fear backsliding on the gains of women business owners during these times. It is now, more than ever, that we need the PCSW to protect the rights and the health and safety of all Connecticut women.

Also, please consider the message you would send to more than half of Connecticut's population by curtailing the activities of this vital commission: women's rights are only possible

THE VOICE OF MICRO BUSINESS IN CONNECTICUT

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when we can afford them. Is this true? Are the rights and health and safety of women something we really want to toss on the scrap heap when times get tough? Is pay equity suddenly irrelevant because we have a deficit? We believe the issues of women's pay equity, sexual harassment, human trafficking, are much more than luxuries. We believe these are fundamental causes, vital to the human condition of more than 50 percent of our population. The work PCSW does is critical for the well being of more than half the state's citizens.

In the 35 years the PCSW has been active, they have brought about tremendous advances for women, but their work is far from done. We believe there is still a long way to go, and much of the violence and injustices against women will resurface in their absence. And it's not just deep-rooted, deliberate sexism that worries us. We are also concerned that future laws and policies could have an inadvertent negative impact on women and the businesses they own. PCSW is the only state institution that looks at proposed legislation to evaluate its potential impact on women and families, so their oversight is crucial.

Finally, we urge the committee to remember why this commission is "permanent". Their work must always be allowed to continue without regard to unforeseeable conditions. The stakes are simply far too high.



UNIVERSAL
HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION
of CONNECTICUT

Testimony
Supporting the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Connecticut Women's Health Campaign
Appropriations Committee
February 11, 2009

Jill Zorn
Program Officer
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut

I am here on behalf of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, and as a member of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign Executive Committee of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). I support PCSW and the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign as the preeminent voice advocating to insure that the health care needs of women are addressed.

I have been involved with the Women's Health Campaign for over five years, first participating in their work when I was Chapter Programs Director at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and now, for the past three years while employed at the Universal Health Care Foundation. The current and previous Executive Directors of PCSW, Teresa Younger and Leslie Gabel-Brett have both served on our Foundation's Board of Directors. They each contributed an invaluable perspective to our work to achieve quality, affordable health care for every resident of our state.

Health is one of the three priority issue areas of PCSW. Women face significant challenges in the health care arena. In addition to having distinct health care needs such as reproductive health, they are more prone than men to have chronic conditions requiring ongoing treatment. Women are also overwhelmingly the caregivers for parents or children with health problems or disabilities. As reported by the National Women's Law Center, women are more likely to need and use health services, but on average have lower incomes than men. Women with insurance face higher out-of-pocket costs than men as a share of their income. They are more likely to put off needed health care expenditures and to more frequently incur medical debt. They also have less access to employer-sponsored insurance and are more likely to rely on government health care programs.

The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign is a broad coalition of groups committed to working for the health and well-being of Connecticut women and girls over their life span. Their mission includes achieving access to health care for all women and girls and promoting

awareness of women and girls' health care needs. They have been and continue to be a strong advocate for universal health care, assuring that any legislation passed addresses the specific needs of women. Their role in this debate is essential. They also continue to work on other key women's health priority areas such as:

- Breast and cervical cancer screening and detection
- The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
- Women's behavioral health services
- Elimination of health disparities

Universal Health Care Foundation fully supports the work of PCSW and of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign. We all benefit in our state from their leadership in protecting and promoting women's health issues. Please continue to fund this organization that is so crucial to our state's health and well-being.