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**Written Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Appropriations Committee
Friday, February 20, 2009**

Re: H.B. 6365, AAC The State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2011, and Making Appropriations Therefor – Department of Public Health Budget

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the Department of Social Services budget on behalf of the PCSW, the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign, and the Young Women's Leadership Program

The Governor's budget proposes to cut funding to Aids Services and Community Support Services for AIDS Victims totaling \$6.2M over the biennium. These cuts along with the proposal in the Department of Social Services budget to delay implementation of the HIV/AIDS community-based services waiver for a savings of \$5.6M over the biennium **would result in an \$11.8M cut over the biennium for AIDS services.**

PCSW has become involved in advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS because this disease significantly impacts women and disparately impacts women of color. It is one of the leading causes of death for women in the state of Connecticut.¹

Connecticut ranks seventh in the nation in AIDS cumulative cases through 2006, up from ninth in 2005.² Between 2001-2005, 19% of the Connecticut's AIDS cases were women.³ Of this

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, *Mortality by State, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Age and Causes, 1999-2002*. 9/05 <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>>.

² The Henry F. Kaiser Family Foundation. *Reported Number of AIDS Cases, Cumulative through 2006*. 2/09 <www.statehealthfacts.org>.

population, 62% were Black/African-American women and 16% were Hispanic/Latino women. In 2008, women represented 33% of reported HIV/AIDS cases in Connecticut.⁴

Racial and ethnic populations have been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Connecticut. Although Blacks/African-Americans and Hispanics represent 9.1% and 9.4% of the State's population,⁵ 62.3% of reported AIDS cases and 65.9% of reported HIV infections were among these populations between 1980-2005.⁶ Among women, the disparities were even more dramatic, with Black/African-American and Hispanic women representing 70.2% of females with AIDS, and 72.3% of females with HIV infection.⁷

This proposal is detrimental to the health and safety for all Connecticut residents, particularly women of color. We thank you for your attention and urge you to reject cuts to AIDS services.

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. *Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) cases, by year of diagnosis and selected characteristics: United States, 2001-2005*. 2/09 <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>>.

⁴ Connecticut Department of Public Health. *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program HIV AIDS Cases Reported in 2008 by Sex, Race and Age*. 2/09 <www.dph.ct.gov>.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, *Table DP-a. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics*.

⁶ CT Department of Public Health. *CT HIV/AIDS Statistics through December 31, 2004*. 1/19/09 <www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/2003/final%20pages/topic_index_X.htm>.

⁷ *Ibid.*