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PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality

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**Written Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Commerce Committee
Tuesday, February 10, 2009**

In Support of:

H.B. 5046, AAC the Small-Contractor Set-Aside Program and the Definition of Small Businesses

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of **H.B. 5046, AAC the Small-Contractor Set-Aside Program and the Definition of Small Businesses**, which would include provisions for micro business and redefine a small business to those with gross revenues below or equal to \$3 million a year.

In Connecticut there are approximately 118,583 privately owned firms in which women own equal or majority share. Between 1997 and 2004, the number of businesses owned by women, their employment level, and their sales increased significantly— a 64% increase in the number of businesses; a 94% increase in the number of persons employed by such businesses, and; a 76% increase in sales.¹

PCSW collaborates with the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owner (CT-NAWBO) and the Microenterprise Resource Group (MERG) to support the growth of women-owned small businesses in Connecticut. Through our collaborations, we have consistently heard that the set-aside program excludes many small businesses because it defines small contractors as businesses with annual revenue of less than \$10 million dollars. A CT-NAWBO survey revealed that many women business owners gross between \$400,000 and \$3 million a year.

¹ Center for Women's Business Research, "Women-Owned Businesses in Connecticut, 2004: A Fact Sheet."

This bill as proposed specifically assists women owned businesses in two ways. First, it would include microenterprises, which are businesses that employ five or fewer people and gross less than \$35,000. Second, by changing the definition of a small business to a business that grosses below or equal to \$3 million a year it would provide more opportunities for women-owned small businesses to participate in state contracting.

We look forward to working with you on these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.