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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Human Services Committee
March 15, 2011**

**Re: S.B. 1031, AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Human Services
H.B. 6550, AAC Medicaid Coverage for Smoking Cessation Treatment**

Senators Musto and Markley, Representatives Butler and Miller, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) regarding the above referenced bills.

S.B. 1031, AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Human Services

S.B. 1013 proposes to implement co-pays for all Medicaid recipients for certain health care services and prescription drugs. This proposal would significantly impact Connecticut's women because 71% of adult beneficiaries are women.¹

S.B. 1031 also proposes to reduce home and community-based services for those living with HIV/AIDS to 50 people. This proposal could impact 2,297 CT women who are living with HIV/AIDS.² Racial and ethnic populations have been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Connecticut. Although African-Americans and Hispanics represent about 20% of Connecticut's population, 65% of reported AIDS cases are among these populations.³ Women of color bear the brunt of any decisions to limit services in the

¹ National Women's Law Center. *Cuts to Medicaid Will Hurt Connecticut*, May 2005.

² Kaiser Family Foundation. *State Health Facts, Connecticut: Estimated Numbers of Persons Living with an AIDS Diagnosis*, 2008. AIDS population in CT – 32.7% African American and 32.1% Hispanic.

³ Ibid.

State, as African-American and Hispanic women make up 70.2% of females with AIDS, and 72.3% of females with HIV infection.⁴

Experience has shown that cutting healthcare services in times of economic crisis does not solve the problem. Proposals to implement co-pays and cut healthcare services to address a budget crisis have been implemented and then rescinded when the negative impact became clear. Budget cuts in these areas are detrimental to the health and safety for all Connecticut residents.

H.B. 6550, AAC Medicaid Coverage for Smoking Cessation Treatment

H.B. 6550 would expand the tobacco cessation products and services that are covered under the Medicaid state plan. In CT, 206,800 women smoked (14.8% of female population), and 7% were pregnant women.⁵ This proposal would assist people to quit smoking and therefore reduce future healthcare expenses.

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

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. *Mother's Day Data on Smoking Moms and Related Harms, 2010 Update*. <<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0257.pdf>>