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PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality

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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 15, 2011**

RE: S.B 482, AAC the Labor Department and the Provision of Statistical Information to the United States Office of Management and Budget

H.B. 5461, AAC Protection for Employees Who Breastfeed or Express Milk in the Workplace

Senators Prague and Guglielmo, Representatives Zalaski and Rigby, 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) in response to the introduction of **S.B 482, AAC the Labor Department and the Provision of Statistical Information to the United States Office of Management and Budget**, and **H.B. 5461, AAC Protection for Employees Who Breastfeed or Express Milk in the Workplace**.

S.B 482, AAC the Labor Department and the Provision of Statistical Information to the United States Office of Management and Budget

S.B. 482 which would provide updated state labor and employment information to the United States Office of Management and Budget. PCSW supports the goal of this bill, which is to provide state agencies with access to current information when formulating its affirmative action plans for state contracts. PCSW would request that gender-specific data be updated as well, considering that:

- Women are 48% of Connecticut's workforce¹
- 76% of women aged 20-64 are in the Connecticut labor force.²

PCSW has been working on wage equity issues for years and have found that the current data does not accurately reflect the wage status of women in the State. Due to lack of data, we have taken different avenues to highlight wage inequities. For example, we have compared female-dominated jobs vs. male-dominated jobs

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Fact Finder, Connecticut Employment Status.

because the data is not available in each occupational category reported by the Department of Labor (DOL). But the problem extends beyond DOL data because there is no requirement for any agency to collect the data.

During the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) process, we discovered that in order to insure that **All Connecticut Women are Economically Self-Sufficient**; we could no longer ignore the fact that wage data by gender is not collected. The RBA process gave us a clear data development agenda, which includes research questions to enable PCSW and other state agencies to bring women into higher wage work and put those who have lost jobs back to work. Highlights of data needed include:

- Average income by occupation type, and by gender in Connecticut (along with projected growth in jobs, current annual openings)
- Connecticut State and local sector employment and average earnings, by gender
- Connecticut workers employed in a field of study related to their degree, by gender
- Connecticut earnings by union/non-union status, by gender
- Number of Connecticut workers in the licensed trades, and their earnings, by gender
- Numbers of Connecticut workers in non-traditional occupations and their average annual earnings, by gender
- Female graduates of Connecticut's Higher Education system and their wages by field of degree
- Connecticut workers with pensions and other retirement benefits, by occupation type and gender

Most of the needed data could be obtained through passage of S.B. 482. This bill acknowledges that without information, we cannot strategize the solutions to eliminate existing disparities. We understand that full implementation of this bill would produce a substantial fiscal note; therefore we suggest that if employers are not already collecting gender-specific data, they incorporate it when compiling new forms, applications, or websites.

The State needs gender wage data to adequately support 48% of its workforce. It is needed to plan and target resources in order to raise women's wages, empower women to achieve wage equity, and simulate growth in Connecticut.

H.B. 5461, AAC Protection for Employees Who Breastfeed or Express Milk in the Workplace

HB. 5461 would allow employees who are denied their right to express breast milk in the workplace to file a complaint with the Labor Commissioner. PCSW supports the intent of this bill, which is to provide a family-friendly work environment for breast-feeding mothers.

Gender-Specific Data

- 48% of Connecticut's workforce are women³
- 55% of mothers with infants are in the labor force.⁴
- 83% of mothers went back to work within a year of their child's birth.⁵

In 2001, the State Legislature recognized the need for women to balance work and family responsibilities, when it passed the law to provide a location within an employment facility to express milk in private. Additionally, the 2001 law explicitly stated that an employee could practice this right without fear of discrimination or adverse employment action. H.B. 5461 takes this law a step further by providing a mechanism to report incidences of discrimination or adverse employment actions.

³ See footnote 1.

⁴ <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/fertility.html>

⁵ http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/employment_occupations/011536.html

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

