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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
Appropriations Committee
February 17, 2012**

Re: H.B. No. 5014 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013 – Department of Social Services Budget

Senators Harp and Kane, Representatives Walker and Miner, 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 Department of Social Services budget.

We applaud the efforts to expand services to those that need assistance to remain living in their homes rather than health institutions with the proposals to expand the private pay assisted living pilot and expand personal care assistance services. This could potentially assist a large number of women as 15.4% (276,896) of the State's female population is 65 years of age or over.¹

On the other hand, the proposal to restructure Medicaid for Low-Income Adults and delay implementation of the HIV/AIDS waiver for yet another year will be detrimental to the State's population.

Medicaid for Low-Income Adults

The recommendations to limit benefits, count family income for adults between 19 and 26, and reinstate an asset limit would create a second-class Medicaid program for low-income adults, now called HUSKY D. It is unclear why this recommendation is seen as a cost benefit since currently the federal government reimburses Connecticut 50% of the costs of HUSKY D, and in 2014 the federal government will reimburse at 100%.

HIV/AIDS Waiver

- In 2008, 2,297 CT women were living with HIV/AIDS.¹
- African-American and Hispanic women make up 70.2% of females with AIDS, and 72.3% of females with HIV infection.²

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

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 The continual postponement of the implementation of this waiver is detrimental to the health and safety of all Connecticut residents, particularly women of color.

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

¹U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder. *Connecticut Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007*.

³ 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.