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Testimony for Permanent Commission on the Status of Women's  
Budget Hearing on February 19, 2013

While I understand the importance of curtailing our state budget, doing so at the expense of 51% of the CT population is not the answer.

As a resident of CT and a working woman, I am well-aware of the struggles that many CT women face to gain access to health care, to receive equal pay for equal work, to work in a nondiscriminatory workplace, and to enjoy economic stability. As a United Methodist minister, a hospital chaplain, and a board member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice-CT, I have fought against conservative religious voices that claim to speak for all people of faith, drowning out the necessity for equal access to a full range of reproductive health care services, including contraception and abortion for all women. Merging PCSW into a larger, broader commission would result in CT women losing a strong, vocal, well-informed advocate for our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Even in CT, the well-being of women's lives can be precarious. Without PCSW, the needs and rights of women and girls will suffer, and in turn, families, communities, and our entire state will suffer. Don't let women's issues get trampled by budgeting needs: Keep PCSW an independent legislative commission for the well-being of women, their families, their communities, and our state.

Thank you,

Rev. Sara Lamar-Sterling  
New Haven, CT

