

# AURORA FOUNDATION

For and by women and girls

February 14, 2013

Senator Tony Harp  
Representative Tony Walker  
Chairs, Legislative Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Walker,

On behalf of the Aurora Women and Girls Fund community, I am writing to express our dismay at the current budgetary proposal of consolidation that includes the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

As the only free-standing foundation serving women and girls in CT, the Aurora Foundation is one of twelve sister funds throughout CT. that has been privately created to provide funding and other types of support to the women and girls in various parts of the State. We do this work because we know that ultimately, all of CT's families and citizens are served by these actions, and that social change can be created through philanthropy. Combined assets of these funds have increased more than six-fold, from \$2.9 million in 2002 to \$18.7 million in 2011. Grants have also increased more than six-fold during this time, from \$150,000 in 2002 to more than \$986,000 in 2011. Donors to these funds now number more than 3,500 individuals and support is growing.

Much of the firm data that has supported our individual and collective work to date has come through the dedicated staff of the PCSW, led by the amazing presence of PCSW leader Teresa Younger. This support and information has been critical to moving our work forward in a coordinated and educated manner.

Rather than consolidating the work of the Commission, we would suggest that you expand the Commission's role to include an even broader type of statewide coordination of the resources which are aimed at women and girls, to provide opportunities for more strategic use of the funds that we are all bringing to the statewide table. At a time when State funding is being cut, it would seem even more imperative to provide leadership in spending privately-raised philanthropic dollars more strategically. We believe that PCSW could fill that gap.

Please consider our opinions in your decision-making process. There are many individuals who will watch this process with interest.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Dumont-Smith  
Executive Director