

CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS OF TELLING THEIR STORIES

February 19, 2013

For the Appropriations Committee
In support of the independence and funding of the
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women



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320 Fitch Street

New Haven, CT 06515

on the campus of Southern
Connecticut State
University

P 203.392.9007

F 203.392.9012

E INFO@CWHF.ORG

W WWW.CWHF.ORG

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written support of PCSW on behalf of the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. For over 20 years the Hall has partnered with the PCSW to educate and empower women, and the Hall relies on the PCSW to monitor and protect our progress and move women's issues forward. There are many organizations working on women's behalf around the state but the PCSW is the authority where we all turn for up-to-date statistics and first-hand knowledge on current issues. In essence the PCSW is the glue that binds us all together as we work on behalf of women.....who represent over 50% of Connecticut's population

For 40 years the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the State's leading force for women's equality, has played a critical role in the state and nationally to ensure women's voices are heard. We submit this testimony today to urge your continued support for the PCSW as a stand-alone independent commission and to oppose further cuts to their budget.

PCSW is the only nonpartisan comprehensive state institution that evaluates laws and policies for their impact on the lives of women and their families. Many well-regarded groups turn to them - and especially now as the economy struggles to recover. For example, when the Connecticut chapters of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) and the Micro Enterprise Resource Group (MERG) closed their doors, they turned to the PCSW to continue working on behalf of women-owned businesses.

Because of their position, PCSW has the ability to monitor state policy on a broad range of issues. They do so in part by working with numerous coalitions and workgroups to bring women's voices to different discussions and debates. In the past few years alone, PCSW was involved in legislative efforts to strengthen women's earning capacity advocating around Equal Pay for Equal Work, Minimum Wage and Paid Sick Days bills. In this economic climate, these legislative issues are extremely important for women, especially those who are the sole providers for their families.

Join us for our 20th Anniversary!
Women's Education - Women's Empowerment
November 6, 2013



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But their work is not only focused on women's economic position. Equally important is the work PCSW does to focus attention on the quality of services available to women and girls. They have been actively involved in fighting against potential hospital mergers which might limit women's access to reproductive health services.

Additionally they sit on the Commission for Child Support Guidelines which addresses how to make the state child support guidelines more effective and family friendly. Both of these issues are vital to strengthening Connecticut's families.

By providing information to state agencies, PCSW saves the state money and improves the performance of these agencies. We continue to see their importance in providing training to state agencies. One example of this service is the sexual harassment training and technical assistance which the Commission has provided state employees and agencies. The reduction of sexual harassment complaints saves state dollars on unnecessary litigation in the future.

Legislators have difficult choices to make over the coming months on how to best balance the state budget. The PCSW has already taken significant cuts to its funding but staff continue to work hard for the women in our state. By maintaining the PCSW's budget and independence we will prevent any further rollbacks in the progress of women's issues in the State. Merging the PCSW with other commissions will silence the voices of over 50% of Connecticut's population and their families in a time when more than ever, their needs and concerns must be heard. By maintaining independence and funding for the PCSW, the State will be doing right for the women of Connecticut and thus the progress of the State and its citizens.

Thank you.