February 19, 2013

Senators Harp and Kane and Representatives Walker and Miner,
Appropriations Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

To our distinguished leaders:

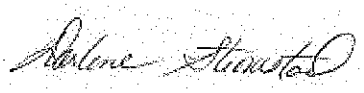
During the past year, I had the opportunity to work closely with leadership of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women as we attempted to find alternatives to provide reproductive services in our community while merging with St. Mary's Hospital. As you are probably aware, operating a healthcare organization that would have been compliant with the Ethical and Religious Directives of the Catholic Church provided some challenges.

PCSW worked collaboratively and tirelessly with our organization to explore and analyze options that would protect the rights of women – and men – in a venue that was nondiscriminatory, safe and met our community needs.

As we worked through options, I was comforted, as both a healthcare professional and as a woman, to know that there was a state-designated department which is focused on protecting all of our reproductive rights on an ongoing basis.

I urge you to protect this important state resource.

Sincerely,



Darlene Stromstad, FACHE
President/CEO
Waterbury Hospital