Appropriations Committee Hearing
February 19, 2013
Support of Funding and Independence for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Comments submitted by Cheryl Dunson, President

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization with over 1600 members which is committed to effective public policy and active involvement of citizens in their government. As you consider the Governor's Budget, the League urges you to provide adequate funding for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and to keep PCSW as a stand-alone independent commission.

Women represent 51% of the state's population and own over 100,000 businesses in CT*. What happens to women has a direct bearing on the health and well being not only of their families but on their communities and the state. As an independent, nonpartisan commission, PCSW examines how policies and programs affect women and their families in the past, present and future. As a watchdog agency, PCSW provides essential research, spotlights critical issues, and recommends public policy approaches to address effects of gender discrimination over time. In recent years, the League of Women Voters has collaborated with PCSW on a broad array of initiatives such as the Conn Gap program focusing on executive branch hiring practices, on advocacy to protect women's reproductive rights during hospital mergers, and in encouraging women to become active participants in our democracy.

We recognize the difficult choices that legislators make to address budget shortfalls and create balanced budgets. The PCSW's annual allotment of approximately $505,000 is approximately 35 cents for each of Connecticut's nearly 1.5 million women over the age of 18. A modest investment which yields returns in removing barriers, spotlighting needed changes, and promoting the success of women in our state for our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

*http://smb.blob.core.windows.net/smbproduction/Content/State_of_Women-Owned_Businesses-Report_FINAL.pdf

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