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**February 19, 2013**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**Testimony in opposition to Section 11 of House Bill 6350**

On behalf of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Organization for Women (CT NOW), we want to express our strong opposition to Section 11 of House Bill 6350, which consolidates of the Permanent Commission of the Status of Women into the Commission of Citizens Advocacy.

The Connecticut Chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) Board is comprised of members who devote their time and talent to women's causes in an effort to better the lives of women around the state. We are very grateful to have the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) as a partner; working beside us on almost every issue we define as important to lives of women throughout Connecticut. CT NOW believes that the personal is indeed political; therefore it strives to impact and change attitudes, beliefs, and policies that harm all women by fighting for political, economic, and social justice through education, organizing and action. Without the political presence and education opportunities that PCSW provides women of the state, our organization would be left to try to achieve this mission alone.

PCSW is a unique member of the legislative branch because it is defined by a specific goal: to work on behalf of women. To many skeptics, this goal may be deemed as unnecessary, however, without PCSW women would not have a voice. They are one of the only organizations that promote an agenda unique to the needs of women. The Commission is responsible for championing legislation that has helped our grandmothers, mothers, sisters and future daughters.

We object strongly to the notion that women's issues are interchangeable with those of other groups. It is narrow-minded to assume the issues of women, various ethnic groups, children and LGBT people are the same, that discrimination against these groups manifests in the same ways, or that the remedies are the same. They are not. Evidence of the population-specific advocacy that this agency makes was seen

this past fall when PCSW's Executive Director, Teresa Younger, monitored the potential Waterbury Hospital merger to ensure that reproductive rights, ones that are uniquely female, were protected.

PCSW's work supports a woman's economic security, health and safety throughout her lifespan and helps eliminate gender-based discrimination. The Commission has studied the effects of issues such as gender discrimination in the workplace, and highlighted that the pay gap robs women of means to provide for themselves and their families, and destabilizes financial security in old age by affording less Social Security income and fewer assets. CT NOW applauds Governor Malloy for authorizing the Commissioners of the Departments of Labor and Community and Economic Development to further study the factors that contribute to the gender wage gap in Connecticut's workforce and make recommendations for actions that will eliminate that inequity. Indeed, enlightened public policy needs informed data and recommendations for the future solvency and well-being of this population. Thankfully, PCSW provides ongoing public policy research to legislators seeking to make the most informed vote.

We are well aware of the dire state of the budget, but we question who is served well by this consolidation.

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