February 19, 2013

Senator Harp, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am not a politically motivated or involved person.

I agree that the state budget is in dire need of over hall.

But the absurdity of merging the PCSW with the commissions on children, Asian-Americans, Latinos and African-Americans, is deplorable. It demonstrates the very narrow mindedness and inequalities of a male dominant society. Combining these groups is essentially setting women's rights back the 40 years that the PCSW has been in existence.

Women are working just as hard as men, in many cases with the joys and burdens of kids and aging parents, and without the support of any man, let alone government assistance. I divorced my husband when my children were 3 and 5 years old. It was not a decision made lightly. He had alcoholic tendencies and was becoming abusive. Having been raised by hard-working parents, in a safe loving home I knew this was not what I wanted for my family.

When we divorced, I had a college degree and knew I wanted nothing from him for me but only what was due for our children. I never received assistance from the state but focused on how I could apply myself to create a better home for my children. As a mother, as a woman, I was determined.

I found strength in the friendships that I developed with the strong female leaders in my PTA, my professional organizations and my community. These women, and every hard working woman who pulls her own weight has the right to fair pay and equality as any man.

Combining our resource with other over-burdened commissions is not an answer to our budget crisis.

-Julia Agvent