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**Testimony of
Teresa C. Younger
Executive Director
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Appropriations Committee
March 7, 2014**

Re: S.B. 340, AAC A Two-Generational School Readiness Plan

Senators Bye and Kane, Representatives Walker and Miner, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) regarding S.B. 340, which would address long-term learning and economic success for low income families by promoting high quality preschool for families living at 75% of the federal poverty level; provide parents the opportunity to acquire high school diplomas, adult education, and technical skills to increase their employability.

This bill addresses two issues important for women - economic self-sufficiency through employment and job training, and the childcare needed to participate in the workforce.

Impact on CT Women:

- In Connecticut, women represent 48% of the labor force.¹ Of the female population over the age of 16, 63% (934,257) are in the labor force, of which 25.3% have children under the age of 6 years old.²
- Of the female population over the age of 18, 9.8% live below the federal poverty level.³
- In Connecticut, 426,553 adults over the age of 18 do not have a high school diploma, which is 16.6% of the adult population.⁴

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2010), American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

² Ibid.

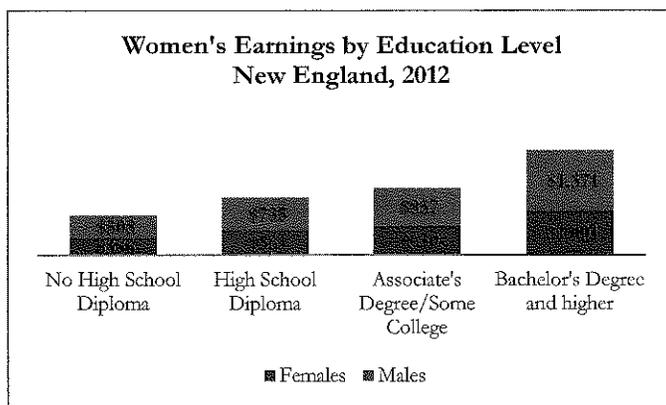
³ U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2008-2012 American Community Survey – 5-Year Estimates, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age.

⁴ Connecticut State Department of Education (2012). Adult Education Program Profile – Statewide, 2010-2011.

Most families with children in Connecticut spend 30% to 40% of their income on childcare.⁵ The price of center-based care for one child can average from \$3,780 to \$18,773 annually depending on where the family lives and the age of the child.⁶ Access to affordable quality childcare is essential to a mother being able to enter the workforce.

Householders with less education are much more likely to have insufficient incomes. Nearly half (46%) of individuals with less than a high school education have incomes below the FESS. The rate drops quickly as education increases, falling to just 8% for those with a college degree or more.⁷

Earnings increase significantly for both men and women as educational levels increase. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics⁸, in 2012 the median weekly earnings of New England women workers without a high school was \$386; those with a high school diploma was \$561; those with some college or an associate's degree was \$659 and; those with a bachelor's degree and higher was \$1,001. The wages for women were consistently lower than their male counterparts.



Sixty-six percent of Connecticut jobs created by 2018 will require at least some post-secondary education.⁹ To fulfill this future need, state and local policy must focus on developing good jobs, and promoting post-secondary education and job training. S.B. 340 is such a policy.

We look forward to working with you to address these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.

⁵ Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. (June 2007). *Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

⁶ National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (March 2011). *2011 Child Care in the State of Connecticut*.

⁷ Diana M. Pearce, footnote 3.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (January 2014). *Highlights of Women's Earnings: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont*.

⁹ *Wider Opportunities for Women. The Basic Economic Security Tables™ Index (BEST) for Connecticut, 2012*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.