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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Commerce Committee
February 27, 2014**

**Re: H.B. 5269, AA Creating Parity Between Paid Sick Leave Benefits and Other Employer-Provided Benefits
H.B. 5275, AAC the Learn Here, Live Here Program and Business Creation**

Senators LeBeau and Frantz, Representatives Perone and Lavielle, 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 the above referenced bills.

H.B. 5269, AA Creating Parity Between Paid Sick Leave Benefits and Other Employer-Provided Benefits

Access to paid sick days is beneficial for women for a variety of reasons including the fact that women are more likely to take time off from work to care for a sick child. Seventy-one percent of mothers with children under age 18 are in the workforce¹ and 80% of mothers have primary responsibility to take their children to medical appointments.² Without the ability to take paid time off from work to care for herself or her sick child, a mother's economic stability may suffer.

H.B. 5269 would erode the significant progress made by the passing of Connecticut's paid sick days law. Specifically, this bill would cut out workers in every job in the manufacturing industry at all facilities from being covered by the original law. It also provides incentive to employer's to become a "small employer for a week" and evade the law by changing the current requirement that service workers earn paid sick leave if the business they work for employs at least 50 people in Connecticut *during any quarter of the last year to a single specific week in October.*

Maintaining family friendly work place policies, like access to paid sick days, is critical for all workers but especially women. The importance of supportive work/life policies and practices is clear; employees exhibit more positive work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, commitment to employer, and retention, as well as more

¹ Families and Work Institute, *Times Are Changing: Gender and Generation at Work and at Home*, 2009
<http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times_Are_Changing.pdf>

² A Better Balance, *Paid Sick Time and the Health of Your Children: What You Need to Know*, August 2011

positive life outcomes, such as less interference between job and family life, less negative spillover from job to home, greater life satisfaction, and better mental health.³

H.B. 5275, AAC the Learn Here, Live Here Program and Business Creation

H.B. 5275 would mandate that the Department of Economic and Community Development establish the Learn Here, Live Here program and would allow funds from the program to be applied to the creation of a new business within the state.

Housing

The Learn Here, Live Here programs intent is to encourage students who attend college or technical school in the state to stay in the state after graduation. To do this, the program provides incentives for first-time home buyers to ease the cost of home ownership. This is significant because Connecticut has been experiencing a “brain drain” for many years. Talented and energetic young people that received their educations in the state are leaving in high numbers, in large part due to the high cost of living. As the baby boomer generation reaches the age of retirement it is critical that there are younger workers to fill the ranks.

Business Creation

If this bill is passed the second aspect of the program would be to support the creation of new businesses. The same population (graduates from a Connecticut institution of higher education) would be eligible for incentives that would ease the costs associated with the establishment of a new business within the state.

Over the past few years there has been a marked increase in the number of entrepreneurs, including female entrepreneurs in the U.S. According to a study done by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 12.3% of working adults ages 18-65 were starting or running a new business in 2011. The same study showed that women are starting to catch up to men – for every 10 men that create a new business there are 8 women doing the same thing.⁴

Supporting a young woman’s dream of homeownership and/or creating her own business is a smart move for Connecticut’s economy. Keeping talented young people in the state will ensure that Connecticut’s workforce remains strong and vibrant, even as the baby boomer generation leaves the ranks.

We thank the committee for your attention to these matters.

³ Families and Work Institute, The National Study on the Changing Workforce, 2002
<<http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/research/summary/nscw2002summ.pdf>>

⁴ Forbes, Closing the Gender Gap for Women Entrepreneurs, Dec. 2012 < <http://www.forbes.com/sites/babson/2012/12/05/closing-the-gender-gap-for-women-entrepreneurs/>>