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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee
February 11, 2014**

Re: HB 5029, AAC Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus

Senators Boucher and Cassano, Representatives Willis and Legeyt, 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 *HB 5029, AAC Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus*, which will improve policies and responses to victims of sexual assault and intimate partner violence on college campuses.

Impact on Women:

- Women and girls are the vast majority of victims of sexual assault in the United States. Nearly 1 in 5 women, or 22 million, have been raped in their lifetimes.¹ In Connecticut, 26% of women and 10% of men are sexual assault survivors.² Almost all of the perpetrators are male (98%).³
- College students are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault: 1 in 5 women have been sexually assaulted while in college.⁴

PCSW supports passage of H.B. 5029 which would provide concrete policies, procedures, and notice and training requirements in an attempt to comprehensively address sexual assault and intimate partner violence on college campuses.

PCSW respectfully request that the following additions be considered to ensure that all relevant parties are included in developing a long-term solution to college campus violence; data is collected; and , comprehensive and victim-friendly policies are implemented:

- Generally: The federal Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2013 extended the Jeanne Clery Act to include acts of domestic violence, dating violence and stalking to a list of major crimes that all

¹ The White House Council on Women and Girls (January 2014). Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action.

² Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS). Sexual Assault in Connecticut Fact Sheet.

³ The White House Council on Women and Girls, footnote 2.

⁴ The White House Council on Women and Girls, footnote 2.

colleges and universities are required to report. H.B. 5029 appears to adhere to federal requirements, however it is not consistent in identifying *both* sexual assault and intimate partner violence in the outlined legislation. PCSW suggests that all references include both terms – ***sexual assault and intimate partner violence***.

- Section 2 requires training. PCSW suggests that special police force, campus security personnel, Title IX Coordinators, varsity athletes, fraternities, and sororities be included in the training requirements.
- Section 3 requires that each institution of higher education establish a trained campus response team for each of its campuses. PCSW suggests that sexual assault counselors, domestic violence counselors, and Title IX coordinators be included on the response team.
- Section 3 requires the development of a “victim-centered response,” however it is not defined. PCSW suggests that it be defined, per the recommendation of the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, as:

“Victim-centered response” means the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim of sexual assault or intimate partner violence that (A) ensures the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner, (B) ensures an understanding of how victim trauma affects victim behavior, (C) maintains victim safety, privacy and confidentiality, and (D) recognizes that victims are never responsible for the crimes committed against them and that offenders are always responsible for their crimes.

HB 5029 presents an opportunity to develop a much needed plan to concretely and comprehensively address sexual and domestic violence on college campuses. We look forward to working with you to address these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.