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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the Judiciary Committee
March 31, 2014**

Re: H.B. 5593, AAC Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Senators Coleman and Kissel, Representatives Fox and Rebimbas, 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 bill.

H.B. 5593 enhances civil and criminal protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It also requires public schools to include programming about teen dating violence awareness and prevention.

Impact on Women – Domestic Violence:

In 2013, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence provided services to 56,178 victims.¹ The number of individuals victimized is unknown since many do not report the abuse and/or seek assistance.

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that could include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse. Domestic violence affects the health status of many women throughout the state, no matter their racial, ethnic, cultural or socioeconomic status.

Impact on Women – Sexual Assault:

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.² In Connecticut, 26% of women and 10% of men are sexual assault survivors.³ Almost all of the perpetrators are male (98%).⁴

Connecticut has made many advances in establishing law and public policy regarding domestic violence and sexual assault. This bill would further Connecticut's policies to protect victims of these crimes. We look forward to working with you to address these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV).(2013) Domestic Violence Service Statistics, Connecticut. Retrieved from <www.ctcadv.org>.

² The White House Council on Women and Girls (January 2014). Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action.

³ Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS). Sexual Assault in Connecticut Fact Sheet.

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