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**Testimony of  
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women  
Before the Judiciary Committee  
March 24, 2014**

**Re: H.B. 5569, AA Establishing a Child Nursery Facility at the Connecticut Correctional Institution, Niantic**

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, which would establish a nursery facility at York prison to care for infants born to women detained in the facility.

*Impact on Women:*<sup>1</sup> As of January 2014, 1,109 women were being detained at York Correctional Institution (773 sentenced and 336 accused). York CI is a high-security facility, but as the only institution for female offenders it serves all females no matter their security level.

Passage of this bill would provide an opportunity for mother and child to bond. According to experts on this issue:

The way baby and parents get started with one another helps the early attachment unfold. The days and weeks after birth are a sensitive period in which mothers and babies are uniquely primed to want to be close to one another. A close attachment after birth and beyond allows the natural, biological attachment- promoting behaviors of the infant and the intuitive, biological caregiving qualities of the mother to come together. Both members of this biological pair get off to the right start at a time when the infant is most needy and the mother is most ready to nurture.<sup>2</sup>

Bonding gives babies a sense of security and self-esteem. In a prison setting, allowing a mother to bond with her child may assist in advancing the physical and mental health of the child and mother. We look forward to working with you to address these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Correction (2014). York Correctional Institution. Retrieved March 20, 2014 at [www.ct.gov/doc](http://www.ct.gov/doc).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Williams Sears, et. al (1992, 2003). The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two.