

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2015

Senators Bye and Kane, Representatives Walker and Ziobron, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

I have followed the work of the PCSW for most of its existence. There have been a number of things it has done to distinguish itself:

- It has always been a leader in the effort to educate women, and especially girls, about ways to be financially self-sufficient especially by qualifying for jobs that provide adequate pay and benefits.
- It has always been a strong voice for women's legal rights at the General Assembly, especially in areas that are arcane, mostly invisible to the public, but very important in actual practice.
- It has helped to bring together groups of advocates for women to make their voices stronger and more reflective of women's needs.
- It has helped legislators and executive branch representatives understand women's issues and the policies that are needed to improve the conditions of women's lives.

And perhaps most significantly, it has always been a source of reliable information and data about women, their economic status, health, and safety. This data, available through published reports and online, assists public agencies, non-profits, and funding sources direct resources to efforts that are most likely to have real impacts on women and their families. The PCSW has always been a data driven, research based organization. Little of that research can be done in-house with a reduced staff. In recent years, PCSW has contracted with national organizations to build on their research, and to enable them to develop more Connecticut-specific and localized data and policy proposals. The funds that enable PCSW to do this work have been removed from our budget.

The PCSW is more than an advocacy group. It is a source of knowledge necessary to create good policy. Its research is like the national census, but better because it uses data that the census doesn't. There is no other source for the contribution that it makes to the legislative process.

It is too easy to become complacent about the inequities of our society. The PCSW makes sure that none of us is complacent; that we know the facts about women's economic status, their working conditions, the issues facing their families. And that includes racial and ethnic disparities.

Connecticut has always been a state known for its progressive social policies. We need the PCSW and its research to continue on that path. We urge you to restore our research funding and to preserve our institutional integrity.

Thanks for your consideration.

Antonia Moran

Chair, PCSW