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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Submitted to the
Human Services Committee
February 10, 2015**

Re: Proposed S.B. No. 795 AN ACT CONCERNING A TWO-GENERATIONAL SCHOOL READINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Senators Moore and Markley, Representatives Abercrombie and Wood, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) in support of **S.B. 795 An Act Concerning a Two-Generational School Readiness and Workforce Development Plan**.

In Connecticut, and across the nation, social services programs have historically been structured to treat parents and children separately; there are programs for adults and there are programs for children, each with their own separate eligibility criteria and application processes. A "two-generational model" is one that serves the family as a unit with the goal of achieving family economic security and stability through quality early care and educational opportunities for the child, adult education and job training for the parent(s), and other support services as needed. As such, this model represents a new way of delivering social services that is holistic and acknowledges and addresses the complex needs of families living in poverty.

H.B. 795 would create a statewide plan to develop two-generational programming in Connecticut. The plan would include: strategies to access early childhood education programs, adult education and job training, co-location of child and adult services, the use of public and private service providers, and the use of private funding to enable statewide implementation of the plan. Finally, the bill would create an interagency work group to oversee the implementation of the plan.

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women supports the development of the two-generational approach in Connecticut. We know that the majority of families who would participate in and benefit from such programs are female-headed households. We also know that the current system of social service delivery, while providing an essential safety net for families living in poverty, does not provide adequate pathways to lift families out of poverty. It does not provide women, in particular, with the tools to obtain jobs that have long-term stability and offer opportunities for advancement and wage growth.

In November 2014, the PCSW released new, comprehensive data, which paints a picture of the status of women in Connecticut's workforce (PCSW and the Institute for Women's Policy Research, *The Status of Women in Connecticut's Workforce*, November 2014). <https://ctpcsw.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/status-of-women-in-connecticuts-workforce-2014-11.pdf>. This data bears out the need for two-generational programming.

Our data show that overall, Connecticut women have strong labor force participation compared to the nation as a whole with 63.3% of women aged 16 and older employed or actively looking for work, vs. 58.8% nationally. The data also show that women with dependent children are more likely to be in the workforce than women overall, with 77.7% of women with children under 18, and 73.6% of women with children under age 6 in the workforce. This may sound positive, except that 94.9% of men with children under 18, and 95.3% of men with children under 6 are working. Furthermore, women are more likely to be employed part-time than men (33% compared to 17.3%). Of those working part-time, women are far more likely than men to say they work part-time due to "child care problems" or "family and personal obligations."

Furthermore, when we look at where women are working and what they are earning, we see that occupational segregation by gender and race is alive and well and women's earnings reflect that. Half of employed women in Connecticut work in two occupational categories: 19.7% in service occupations and 30.3% in sales and office occupations. Hispanic and black women are especially likely to work in service occupations and these occupations are the lowest paid for women.

On the other side of the coin, the unemployment rate for single mothers (11%) is nearly twice as high as it is for married women and more than twice the rate for married men (5.8 and 5.2 percent, respectively).

These recent statistics all point to the overwhelming need for policies and programming that address both the caregiving needs of working mothers and the need for workplace policies and workforce training that allow women to achieve higher earnings with opportunities for advancement. Two-generational programming is a step in the right direction for recognizing these realities and addressing the needs of female-headed families.

As the bill does not currently name the membership of the interagency workgroup, the PCSW respectfully requests to be included in this group. The PCSW has access to data to inform the discussion and will ensure that the voices and experiences of the women who head the families who will benefit from two-generational programming are heard.

We thank the committee for your thoughtful consideration of this cutting-edge model of social service delivery, and we welcome the opportunity to be a part of any ongoing discussion.