



Thank you Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Maddie Granato and I am here to testify in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

I am currently a member of the Steering Committee of Young Women Rising, a project of the PCSW that extends on its mission to promote women's leadership by hosting networking events, planning volunteer opportunities and providing career resources to women age 18-35 across the state.

Like many women my age, it's been challenging to find a community that's passionate about women's rights and social justice. Young Women Rising is just that – we are a strong group of positive, diverse women who encourage and uplift each other while navigating our professional and personal lives. Being an active member of Young Women Rising has provided me an outlet to express myself and has helped me immensely not only to find my voice, but also to not be afraid to use it.

The mission and scope of the PCSW's Young Women Rising is unlike any other group in our state, and our work thus far definitely reflects that. Just a few months ago, for example, we launched Project Period, a campaign focused on raising awareness and collecting donations of feminine hygiene products for women currently living in shelters and safe houses. In our first big push over the holiday season, Project Period collected over 1,000 donations for My Sister's Place in Hartford.

The work of both the PCSW and its Young Women Rising Project is far from complete. Connecticut women still earn a mere 83 cents to every man's dollar, (a discrepancy that's even greater for women of color), disproportionately feel the burden of student loan debt and are still too often forced to choose between beginning a family and furthering a career because of our state's – and our nation's – lack of paid maternity leave. Young Women Rising gives women, like me and countless others, the tools and confidence to fight for meaningful change.

The work of the PCSW and Young Women Rising are too valuable to even begin to illustrate in a short piece of testimony. I urge you to continue to support the PCSW and allow it to continue on its mission of achieving equal rights and opportunities for women in our state.

Thank you.