

**Testimony of Austin Longendyke
Concerning H.B. 5044**

Friday, February 19, 2016

Re: Budget of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW)

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Austin Longendyke and I am a resident of Norwich, Connecticut. **I submit this testimony in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and request that the PCSW continue to receive full funding.**

One of the many aspects of Connecticut's government that I admire is the existence of the legislative commissions. The six commissions play the important role of acting as a voice for their respective constituencies in the creation of policy. Yet while we are fortunate to live in a state where women have made tremendous strides on the path toward equality, there is still much work to be done.

It is important to recognize that even the most well-intentioned of policies can have different impacts on different populations. One of the many benefits of the PCSW is the research that it provides on how policies – both existing and proposed – impact the women of Connecticut (comprising 51.3% of the state's population).¹ Having the PCSW available as a resource for legislators ensures that policies introduced and passed by the legislature are strengthening the status of women in the state and not diminishing it.

The tireless work of PCSW ensuring that women in Connecticut have equal opportunity and standing is a testament to its value. I am personally grateful for PCSW's continuous involvement with the effort to address sexual assault on college and university campuses. When I was an undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut, I had the privilege of being a peer educator in the university's sexual assault prevention program. Through that work, I not only met various students from the campus community who had been sexually assaulted, but also learned that some of my closest friends were the survivors of sexual assault. The fact that the PCSW is at the Capitol working with legislators to support survivors of sexual assault and to create preventive programs strengthens the faith that I have in our government to protect and support all of its citizens, regardless of their sex.

This is only one example of the tremendous work that PCSW has and continues to accomplish on behalf of Connecticut women, and I therefore urge all legislators to fully support – and utilize the resources of – the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

I am grateful for your consideration and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Austin Longendyke
Norwich, Connecticut

¹ US Census, Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: Connecticut, 2010
<<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>>