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Testimony of Nicole Seymour, Young Women Rising Steering Committee Member and Research Associate at UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity

Testimony to maintain funding for the CT Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) in the Governor's Budget

To Co-Chairs Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. PCSW plays a crucial organization in the state. PCSW leads and organizes Young Women Rising, a group of 18-35 year old women from across the state. This group, and the steering committee, provides leadership, service, and connection to women beginning their careers and starting their families. As a young professional, this type of connection does not exist elsewhere. It has helped me remain in CT despite the urge to leave for an area with more young people in this age range. PCSW is convening this group and motivating me to work and support other women.

An organization working on issues ranging from economic security to health care, PCSW is truly working to uplift all women and families. If cut, then PCSW may lose its breadth in monitoring and questioning policies and practices that are discriminatory to women. The CT General Assembly having an arm dedicated towards advancing the status of women shows that the state is committed to equality for all women. If the General Assembly reduces funding, the state be making a strong stance against supporting all women in the state.

Women do have more rights than when PCSW first began in the 1970s, but the fight continues. CT must put women and women's rights at the forefront because inequality persists. Without PCSW fighting against such injustice, all women will lose a champion, advocate, and supporter. Without Young Women Rising, I fear young women will lose an important resource to voice our concerns and share a space with other young leaders. With few opportunities for young professionals to develop leadership, service, and networking skills, young women will again be without a way to grow and maintain connection in CT.

I encourage the Appropriations Committee to restore the budget cut to PCSW. Protecting the budget of PCSW will ultimately help support all women and families across the state.

Sincerely,

Nicole Seymour

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