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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Submitted to the
Public Safety and Security Committee
March 1, 2016**

**Re: S.B. 118, AN ACT CONCERNING THE COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT TAXES
AND CHILD SUPPORT FROM LOTTERY WINNINGS**

Senators Larson and Guglielmo, Representatives Dargan and Zupkus, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) on S.B. 118, An Act Concerning the Collection of Delinquent Taxes and Child Support from Lottery Winnings.

Child support payments from non-custodial parents are an important and valuable piece of a family's budget. The average child support payment received by families participating in Connecticut's child support enforcement program is \$198. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Connecticut 2015 cites child support as an essential piece in meeting a single-parent family's basic needs (where that support is available).ⁱ

Half of employed women in Connecticut work in sales and service occupations, which are among the lowest paid occupations for women. Furthermore, employed women are more likely to work part-time than employed men (33% and 17.3%, respectively) and the unemployment rate for single mothers (11%) is nearly twice as high as for married women (5.8%).ⁱⁱ Consequently, female-headed households tend to earn lower wages and have more difficulty meeting self-sufficiency without the assistance of child support and other work supports.

According to the Task Force to Study Methods for Improving the Collection of Past Due Child Support, Connecticut has approximately \$1.5 billion in uncollected child support. The federal government tracks states' performance on collection of current support. On this measure, in Fiscal Year 2012, Connecticut collected a little over half (57.8%) of all current support due. Connecticut fares poorly in comparison to other states – we are last in New England and 38th in the nation on this performance measure. All of these uncollected funds represent money that is not making it to the children who need it and money that is not being invested back in Connecticut's economy in the form of food, clothing and other necessities.

SB 118 proposes to create an intercept when an obligor wins the lottery worth \$600 or more at any office of the Connecticut Lottery Corporation that processes such a lottery ticket. Income withholding is the most effective and efficient way to get child support into the hands of the families to whom it is owed and who need it for their well-being. Nearly three quarters of the child support payments collected in FFY 2014 through Connecticut's Bureau of Child Support Services were through employer and other income intercepts. PCSW supports efforts to improve and streamline the collection of child support, which is the aim of SB 118.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important issue to so many of Connecticut's women.

ⁱ Pearce, Diana, PhD. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Connecticut 2015, September 2015. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

ⁱⁱ Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. The Status of Women in Connecticut's Workforce, November 2014.