



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

March 19, 2021

Testimony of Secretary Melissa McCaw, Office of Policy and Management  
*Presented to the Committee on Government Administration and Elections*

In Support of **Senate Bill 883, An Act Concerning The Recommendations of the Governor's Council on Women and Girls**

Chairs Flexer and Fox, Vice Chairs Haskell and Thomas, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and honorable members of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **Senate Bill 883, An Act Concerning The Recommendations of the Governor's Council on Women and Girls**.

**Senate Bill 883** contains two important proposals stemming from recommendations from the Governor's Council on Women and Girls, of which I serve as Vice Chair, which will advance participation of women and people of color to serve in state government.

First, Senate Bill 883 make it easier for women to run for and win elected office by allowing candidates participating in the Citizens Election Program to use program funds for childcare expenses attributable to their campaign. This codifies an August 27, 2020 Superior Court ruling finding that that state candidates running for office in Connecticut can use public campaign funds under the Citizens Election Program to reimburse child care expenses as long as they are the "direct result of campaign activity," "reasonable and customary for the services rendered" and "properly documented by the campaign."<sup>1</sup> As women are underrepresented in Connecticut state government,<sup>2</sup> this provision is a critical step to reducing barriers to equal participation in politics.

Second, Senate Bill 883 proposes promoting gender and racial diversity on state boards and commissions by codifying the administration's new online portal that makes it easier for residents without experience in state government to learn about and apply for positions, and by directing appointing authorities to seek out diverse candidates and to consider candidates recommended by organizations representing the interests of gender and racial diversity. This proposal recognizes that important work in state government is done not only by elected officials or fulltime employees, but also by volunteer members of the state's many boards and commissions. We must take proactive steps to ensure diverse representation on these important bodies. With these critical objectives in mind, Governor Lamont and Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz plan to request reports on the current membership and any vacancies, as well as the current gender and racial makeup of all boards, committees, commissions and/or councils. We look forward to

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<sup>1</sup> Caitlin Clarkson Pereira v. State Elections Enforcement Commission, Docket No. HHB-CV-19-6054260-S (Aug. 27, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Connecticut Women's Centennial Suffrage Commission's Fifty Years of Women Candidates, 2020 Report, available at [Fifty Years of Women Candidates \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/fiftyyears).



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working through both legislative and administrative action to eliminate racial and gender imbalances on these important bodies.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my strong support for Senate Bill 883 as the Vice Chair of the Governor's Council on Women and Girls and am available should you have any further questions.