



## Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
MARCH 19, 2021

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, 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.

This bill makes two changes to ensure that women are better represented in Connecticut state government. As a member of the Governor's Council on Women and Girls and co-chair of its Leadership Subcommittee, I am proud to offer testimony in support of these practical, concrete solutions that would help eliminate some of the barriers that prevent more women from engaging in public service.

The first section of this bill would allow candidates who participate in the Citizens Election Program to use some of their grant for childcare expenses related to their campaign. Women take on a disproportionate share of childcare responsibilities, and that this divide is often a barrier to participation in the democratic process. We've seen the impact that the unequal distribution of household labor has had on women in the workforce during the pandemic; 1 in 4 women have considered either leaving the workplace altogether or downshifting their careers in a major way over this last year.<sup>1</sup> This bill would ensure that access to childcare is no longer a barrier to public service and that no parent will have to choose between caring for their family or serving their community.

The second part of this bill would promote greater gender and racial diversity on state boards and commissions by making it easier for all residents to find and apply for vacant positions and directing appointing authorities to seek out diverse candidates. Women and people of color are underrepresented throughout state government, but by increasing diversity on boards and commissions would can ensure that a variety of voices and viewpoints are represented and considered. We know from our role as an investor and shareholder advocate that companies with better diversity on their boards and within senior leadership tend to outperform their peers with less diversity. By making the application process for state boards and commissions more accessible and implementing more meaningful guidelines to consider diversity, we will undoubtedly see the benefit of bringing diverse voices to state government.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of **S.B. 883**. I urge the committee to act favorably.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fortune.com/2021/02/13/covid-19-women-workforce-unemployment-gender-gap-recovery/>