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## Dozens Testify for PCSW at Appropriations Committee Hearing

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HARTFORD – In a strong show of support for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women’s 40 years of policy work on behalf of women, about 30 people testified before the Appropriations Committee and a crowd of 150 at a public hearing Tuesday night. Many more submitted written testimony. ([Click HERE to read testimony.](#))

Citizens submitting written testimony on the importance of the Commission ran the gamut from directors of advocacy groups that are long-time partners of the PCSW, to young teens just starting to question issues of social justice. Nationally known figures included author Gina Barecca, Jacqueline Cooke of the U.S. Labor Department, and Lois Uttley, director of New York-based MergerWatch. New supporters of the PCSW included 14-year-old Olivia Heinrich and 17-year-old Kiley Cappetta, both of whom worry about pay inequity; and 18-year-old Sten Spinella, who shared his concern that his younger sister might become a victim of a college campus sexual assault.

In her testimony, PCSW Executive Director Teresa Younger said, “Because of the work of the PCSW, our state government is better equipped to address the needs of working parents, victims of sexual harassment, women with healthcare concerns such as breast cancer and lupus, women business owners, parents seeking child support, childcare workers, and women entering non-traditional occupations.”

The hearing was held to allow the public to air concerns about Gov. Malloy’s proposed merger of the six legislative commissions that currently exist as separate entities serving women, the elderly, children, Latinos, African-Americans and Asian-Pacific Americans. (The proposed merger would also eliminate the Commission on Aging and add advocacy for members of the LGBT community.) During the more than three-hour session, no one testified in support of the proposed merger.

**Below are excerpts of submitted testimony. Full transcripts can be found [HERE](#).**

*From Jessica Sager, executive director, All Our Kin, New Haven:*

“By focusing on the three priority areas of economic and financial security, health and safety, and the elimination of gender discrimination, the PCSW plays a critical role in ensuring that all Connecticut’s women and girls are poised to succeed.”

*From Lois Uttley, director, MergerWatch, New York:*

“PCSW was instrumental in facilitating communication with key elected officials to express reservations about the structure of a proposed joint venture between a Texas-based for-profit health system and Waterbury’s two hospitals... (which was) problematic for women’s health advocates... We firmly believe that without PCSW’s active role, a critical analysis of the proposed hospital merger would have fallen on deaf ears and women in need of certain reproductive services would have been shut out of a new hospital serving the rest of the community.”

*From Olivia Heinrich (age 14), Madison:*

“I work hard, take honors classes and plan on attending college after high school. I will work hard in college, too. Unfortunately, when I get a job after college, I know that if I stay in Connecticut, I will earn 78% of what the boys in my class earn. Why? Because I’m a girl... The PCSW is important because they fight for me and for other girls to fix problems like these.”

*From State Comptroller Kevin Lembo, Hartford:*

“PCSW... provides an important service to the people of Connecticut. Their solid research and data analysis on all matters affecting Connecticut women help guide the Connecticut General Assembly in creating laws that make the state one of the best for women to live in.”

*From Darlene Stromstad, president/CEO, Waterbury Hospital, Waterbury:*

“PCSW worked collaboratively and tirelessly with our organization to explore and analyze options that would protect the rights of women – and men – in a venue that was nondiscriminatory, safe and met our community needs.”

*From the Board of Directors, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Old Greenwich*

“The welfare of the children of Connecticut is entirely dependent on the economic welfare, as well as the health and safety, of their mothers. Simply stated, jeopardizing the well-being of Connecticut’s women will directly jeopardize the well-being of Connecticut’s children.”

*From Sten Spinella (age 18), Chester:*

“My sister is a junior in high school. She would like to stay close to home for her college education. As a female on a Connecticut college campus, there is a one in four chance you will be sexually assaulted... Merging these commissions would be a dangerous step in the wrong direction... For the sake of my sister, keep these groups autonomous. It’s only fair.”

*From Leslie Karen Hammond, president of Southeastern Connecticut Women’s Network, New London*

“Being a Native American and a woman working in a male dominated industry, I can speak first-hand about discrimination. It takes more than a voice today to bring attention to the need of any minority. The PCSW has been the voice for hundreds of thousands of women over the past 40 years.”

*From Shawn McMabon, acting president and CEO, Wider Opportunities for Women, Washington, D.C.*

“The PCSW represents and manifests the highest ideals of a democratic society. And funding for the PCSW, which equals a modest \$.35 for every Connecticut woman over the age of 18, is a smart and sensible investment on behalf of Connecticut families.”

*About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes to study and improve Connecticut women’s economic security, health and safety; to promote consideration of qualified women to leadership positions and to work toward the elimination of gender discrimination. As a non-partisan arm of the General Assembly, the agency monitors, critiques and recommends changes to legislation in order to inform public policy, and assesses programs and practices in all State agencies for their effect on the state’s women. The PCSW serves as a liaison between government and its diverse constituents, and convenes stakeholders, including the business, non-profit and educational communities, local governments, and the media, in order to promote awareness of women’s issues.*