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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
March 6, 2012**

RE: H.B. 5031, AAC Sexual Violence on College Campuses

Senators Bye and Boucher, Representatives Willis and LeGeyt, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) on the above referenced bill.

PCSW supports the portions of H.B. 5031 that require each higher education institutions to adopt and disclose a policy regarding sexual assault and intimate partner violence; and provide prevention and awareness programming. Passage of this bill would impact a significant population of women within the State.

CT Specific Data

- Nearly one in five Connecticut college female residents (19%) are sexual assault survivors.
- One in four (26%) Connecticut women are sexual assault survivors.
- Of the victims who never told anyone about being raped, 24% remained silent because they felt ashamed.

Under the Results Based Accountability (RBA) reporting requirements, the PCSW recommended that the Legislature require higher education institutions to adopt and disclose a policy on sexual assault and intimate partner violence as a means to “turn the curve” for women’s health and safety. Sexual violence causes several long-term health problems, such as chronic pain, headaches, stomach problems, sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, and emotional distress.ⁱⁱ The Centers for Disease Control reports that the health care costs of intimate partner violence –physical assault, rape and stalking – exceed \$5.8 billion each year, nearly \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services.ⁱⁱⁱ

PCSW not only encourage passage of H.B. 5031, we also strongly recommends that a uniform victim-friendly policy be developed to be used at each higher education institution. We have held discussions with representatives from several state universities on this issue, and as of this point each school develops its own policies. Some policies are strong and very effective, others could be improved. If the culture of sexual assault is to be eradicated, it would be best to have a uniform policy, thereby uniform enforcement, throughout the State.

We look forward to working with you to address this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ CONNSACS, Sexual Assault in Connecticut Fact Sheet

ⁱⁱ Center for Disease Control. *Understanding Sexual Violence*.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States." Center for Disease Control. March 2003. Accessed December 9, 2008
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/04_costs.htm>.