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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Environment Committee
March 7, 2014**

Re: S.B. 316, AA Requiring the Labeling of Food Products that are Packaged in Materials that Contain Bisphenol-A

Senators Meyer and Chapin, Representatives Gentile and Shaban, 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) in support of S.B. 316.

S.B. 316 would require the labeling of food and drink packaging that contains bisphenol-A (BPA). Connecticut has already recognized the dangers of BPA exposure by passing P.A. 09-103, AAC Banning Bisphenol-A in Children's Products and Food Products. PCSW supports this new labeling requirement as a measure to protect the health of women who are particularly sensitive to BPA exposure.

According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, people are exposed to BPA when it leaches from the coatings of canned foods and from plastic products, with the highest estimated daily intakes of BPA occurring in infants and children.

Women are disproportionately affected by BPA exposure because this chemical is considered to be an endocrine/hormone disruptor. Endocrine disruptors may interfere with the body's endocrine system and produce adverse developmental, reproductive, neurological, and immune effects in humansⁱ. Additionally, BPA has been associated with increased risk for cardiovascular disease, miscarriages, breast cancer, reproductive dysfunction, metabolic dysfunction and diabetes.ⁱⁱ

Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers are particularly sensitive to BPA exposure because BPA is a substance that passes through the placenta as well as through breast milk, therefore potentially impacting a developing fetus and/or babyⁱⁱⁱ. Research indicates that in-utero exposure to BPA can have damaging effects on a child's development and growth, among other things. As one example, relying on urine samples from nearly 250 moms and children near Cincinnati, Ohio, researchers found that BPA exposure during pregnancy was linked with anxious, depressive and hyperactive behaviors in girls in age 3. The higher the BPA urine levels, the more pronounced the effects.^{iv}

Women, especially pregnant women, deserve the ability to make informed decisions about the products they buy and use. The problem of BPA exposure has gained international notoriety and as a result more women are aware of the dangers of BPA now than ever before. However, current law only requires that certain products, mostly baby products, do not contain this dangerous chemical. More needs to be done in order to protect the health of women.

Connecticut made a big step in the right direction when banning BPA in children's products. Until BPA is banned from all products, requiring food packaging labels is a smart way to help the public make educated decisions about the products they buy. We applaud the committee for your continued attention to this matter.

ⁱ National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Endocrine Disruptors <<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/endocrine/>>

ⁱⁱ Breast Cancer Fund, BPA <<http://www.breastcancerfund.org/clear-science/chemicals-glossary/bisphenol-a.html>>

ⁱⁱⁱ WHO, BISPHENOL A (BPA) - Current state of knowledge and future actions by WHO and FAO
<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/fs_management/No_05_Bisphenol_A_Nov09_en.pdf>

^{iv} The Journal of Pediatrics, Impact of Early-Life Bisphenol A Exposure on Behavior and Executive Function in Children
<<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/10/20/peds.2011-1335>>