

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 29, 2011

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Christine Palm, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
860/240-8449; christine.palm@cga.ct.gov

Robert Norton, Connecticut Commission on Aging
860/240-5202; robert.norton@cga.ct.gov

PCSW and CoA Head to Washington, D.C.;
Join National Effort to Inform Delegation on Adverse Budget Cuts

*Agencies Appeal to Congress about Cuts that Threaten Economic Security
of Families and Older Adults*

HARTFORD -- As Congress works to meet an April 8 deadline for a final budget deal for Fiscal Year 2011, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and the Connecticut Commission on Aging (CoA) will join policy experts, direct service providers and stakeholders from around the country in Washington, D.C., this week to educate Congress about the impact of proposed cuts on the economic security for families and older adults.

The executive directors of the two agencies are traveling at no expense to Connecticut taxpayers to meet with Connecticut Congressional delegation members John Larson (D-1), Joe Courtney (D-2), Rosa DeLauro (D-3), Jim Himes (D-4), Christopher Murphy (D-5), and other members of Congress as part of a three-day meeting hosted by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), a national organization working to achieve economic independence for families.

During the meeting, groups will also discuss a new report, the national *Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST)*, which calculates the monthly income necessary for families to cover their basic expenses, including child care, housing, health care and transportation, and to prepare for the future by saving for emergencies, home ownership, education and retirement.

The report will provide new details on the role public programs for housing, child care and health care play in helping families make ends meet. "What happens to women happens to their families, and the House budget will hurt job growth and weaken the already tenuous ability of many Connecticut families to make ends meet," said PCSW Executive Director Teresa C. Younger. "Cutting off the very programs that are helping families and seniors stay afloat is a short-sighted move that will stall our economic recovery. We know that specific and real cuts to the federal budget need to be a part of any solution to eliminate national debt. However, these cuts must not exacerbate the tenuous economic security of those who truly need help."

-more-

Leading economists are projecting a loss of 700,000 jobs nationwide if the most recent House spending bill for fiscal year 2011 (HR1) is enacted. The bill includes \$61 billion in cuts to job training, education and elder assistance programs, including:

- \$3.8 billion in cuts to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. In 2010, more than 250,000 Connecticut residents took advantage of employment and training services through CTWorks offices statewide. WIA also plays a key role in preparing the long-term care workforce which will need to increase in Connecticut alone by 9,000 direct care workers over the next five years;
- 44 percent cut to the Community Services Block Grant program, which provides nutrition, employment, health and other necessary services to over 20 million low-income people, including five million children, 2.3 million seniors and 1.7 million people with disabilities through 1,065 community action agencies nationwide;
- Cuts to Low-Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which millions of families depend on to stay warm in winter. Last year in Connecticut, LIHEAP served a record 113,000 households, including 32,000 over the age of 60. The ability to afford to heat one's home can literally mean the difference between life and death each winter;
- 67 percent cut to the Section 202 senior housing program, which already has a two-year waiting list for older adults in need of affordable housing.

“In tough economic times, older Americans are often affected dramatically, and all-too-often, invisibly,” said Julia Evans Starr, state Commission on Aging executive director. “Housing, heating and food assistance programs support tens of thousands of older adults and persons with disabilities in Connecticut and we look forward to helping Congress understand how budget decisions affect them.”

About the PCSW: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1973 under Sec. 46a 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.

About the CoA: The Connecticut Commission on Aging was created in 1993 under section 17b-420 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Commission is an independent, non-partisan research and public policy agency of the Connecticut General Assembly. The Commission is devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and to enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For 17 years the Commission has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for older adults and persons with disabilities.