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PCSW Announces Connecticut Government Appointments Project (ConnGAP)

Intends to Hold Gubernatorial Candidates Accountable for Women's Appointments

HARTFORD – The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) announces the Connecticut Government Appointments Project (ConnGAP), part of a national collaboration aimed at ensuring more women are appointed to high-level government positions.

ConnGAP seeks to achieve political parity by helping Connecticut's newly elected governor locate women qualified for high-level paid positions, and by providing the governor's transition team with the names and resumes of candidates for consideration. Women will be recommended for any positions for which they are qualified, regardless of their stands on particular issues and/or party affiliation.

In order to achieve this, ConnGAP will:

- 1) ask all gubernatorial candidates to pledge to name women to 50% of high-level appointments;
- 2) create a pool of resumes of Connecticut women interested in – and qualified for – appointments in the next administration;
- 3) hold the Executive Branch accountable by tracking the governor's appointments; and
- 4) report annually on the governor's progress in keeping the pledge.

“Thanks to its historically enlightened policies, Connecticut currently ranks 8th among American states when it comes to women's representation – 32% of General Assembly seats are held by women, and women hold 37% of top offices in State agencies,” said PCSW Executive Director Teresa C. Younger. “While this is a track record Connecticut's residents can be proud of, there is work still to be done. Women, after all, comprise 51% of the state's population. True parity means that women should, similarly, make up half the population of government office-holders and appointed employees.”

Since being appointed to a high-level government position is often a conduit to running for elective office, ConnGAP will afford more women an opportunity to gain the credibility and experience to enter politics.

“It’s critical that we, as a society, do not move backward – that we not only retain the roughly one-third of government positions held by women, but that Connecticut actually increase that percentage to more accurately reflect the population as a whole,” said Younger. “In this way, Connecticut will set the right example for other state governments.”

ConnGAP is advised by a Steering Committee whose members are: Teresa Younger, PCSW Executive Director & ConnGAP Chair; Marilyn Alverio, Ethnic Marketing Solutions; Sharon Cappetta, Community Foundation for Greater New Haven; Lisa Crutchfield Diggs, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Nancy DiNardo, Connecticut Democratic Party; Carrie Gallagher, Commissioner, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women; Christine Horrigan, Connecticut League of Women Voters; Pamela Mazzarella, American Association of University Women, CT Chapter; Catherine Marx, Connecticut Republican Party; Alice Pritchard, Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF); Alicia Riccio, National Organization for Women, CT Chapter; Helene Robbins, Wells Fargo Private Bank; Patricia Russo, Women’s Campaign School at Yale University; and Kathy Welling, Fairfield County Women & Girls Fund.

The committee has sent out an invitation for organizations throughout the state to join ConnGAP’s non-partisan coalition. In addition, it will begin accepting resumes on Sept. 8.

Connecticut is one of 11 states in the nation with a women’s government appointments project, the concept of which was supported by the Hunt Alternatives Fund, a family foundation based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In addition to Connecticut, the following states are working with Hunt Alternatives to ensure political parity in state government: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

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 “all matters concerning women, and in furtherance of that responsibility shall: (a) inform leaders of business, education, State and local governments and the communications media of the nature and scope of the problem of sex discrimination, with a view to enlisting their support in working toward improvement; (b) serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with services for women; (c) promote consideration of qualified women for all levels of government positions; (d) oversee coordination and assess programs and practices in all State agencies as they affect women.”