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**ConnGAP Press Conference and Kick-Off
Wed., Sept. 8 10:00 Old Judiciary Room, State Capitol**

Former Mass. Lieutenant Gov. Kerry Healey to Speak on Political Parity for Women

HARTFORD – The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) will kick off the Connecticut Government Appointments Project (ConnGAP), part of a national collaboration aimed at ensuring more women are appointed to high-level government positions, on Wed., Sept. 8 at 10:00 in the Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol. Former Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey will speak on political parity for women, which is the aim of the ConnGAP initiative. Healey is part of a national collaborative aimed at improving women's access to leadership positions in government.

ConnGAP will promote women for consideration to leadership positions by providing Connecticut's newly elected governor with a pool of women qualified for about 75 high-level paid appointed positions identified by PCSW. Women will be recommended for any position 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 three Connecticut gubernatorial candidates to pledge to make their best effort to name women to 50% of about 75 identified high-level, paid 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-elect's appointments; and
- 4) report annually on the governor's progress in keeping the pledge.

“Although women comprise 51% of the state's population, they make up only 37% of top offices in State agencies, including those of commissioner, executive director and chief advocate,” said PCSW Executive Director and ConnGAP Chair Teresa C. Younger. “While Connecticut residents can be proud of this track record, there's still work to be done. True

political parity for women means that women should make up half the population of government office-holders and appointed employees, so that state government more accurately reflects the face of the people it serves. Through ConnGAP, Connecticut's governor-elect will have the opportunity to recognize that women are a largely untapped resource for professional and dedicated government service.”

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, Younger says. For the pool of candidates for gubernatorial appointments, ConnGAP is seeking resumes of Connecticut women with executive level skills in strategic planning, management, budgeting and public policy.

ConnGAP is advised by a Steering Committee whose members are: Teresa Younger, PCSW; 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); Jessica Fenner, National Organization for Women, CT Chapter; Helene Robbins, Wells Fargo Private Bank; Patricia Russo, Women's Campaign School at Yale University; and Charlotte Suhler, Fairfield County Women & Girls Fund. ConnGAP Project Director is Michelle Noehren, PCSW's legislative liaison and events coordinator.

To date, 70 organizations throughout the state have joined ConnGAP's non-partisan coalition. They run the gamut from the AARP, Connecticut Chapter, to Yale University's School of Medicine, and include many groups not previously affiliated with any PCSW initiative.

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.

For more information and the application process, go to: www.ctpcsw.com.

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.

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