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**Testimony of  
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women  
Before the  
Housing Committee  
March 1, 2011**

**Re: H.B. 6052, AAC Supportive Housing  
H.B. 6456, AA Establishing a Learn Hear, Live Here Program**

Senators Gomes and McKinney, Representatives Butler and Miller, 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 bills.

**H.B. 6052, AAC Supportive Housing**

H.B. 6052 would establish a program to ensure that any new housing or rehabilitation project set-aside 10% of its units for supportive housing. This bill could benefit the nearly 4,100 individuals in the state who are homeless, a majority of which are women.

*CT Specific Data - 2009<sup>1</sup>*

- Women represent 90% of adults in homeless families
- Women represent 26% of the single adult homeless population
- 4,154 people experiences homelessness on any given day
- 2,482 single adults are homeless
- 423 families with minor children are homeless

The PCSW has focused its attention on the need for safe and affordable housing for women and their children because it is a problem that all women are faced with, whether they are low- or middle-income, married,

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<sup>1</sup> CT Coalitaion to End Homelessness. *Connecticut Counts, 2009.*

single or heads of households. When housing costs are disproportionately high, residents often have to sacrifice other needs to pay their rent or mortgage.

One in five Connecticut households does not have enough income to meet their basic costs of living based upon the family economic self-sufficiency standard (FESS).<sup>2</sup> This lack of self-sufficiency results in homelessness, inability to pay high rental costs, and the inability to keep up with mortgage payments.

### **H.B. 6456, AA Establishing a Learn Hear, Live Here Program**

H.B. 6456, which would offer residents an affordable housing program that helps first-time homebuyers; promotes college education; and address the problem of young people leaving the state after graduation. This bill is of particular concern for the Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP), a project of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) that focuses on empowering young women (ages 18-35) to lead their best lives possible.

Passage of H.B. 6456 would assist young professionals to obtain a house in-state; thereby making it more likely that they will not move out of state. Since 1990, Connecticut has lost more 20-34 year olds than any other state.<sup>3</sup> From 1995-2000, Connecticut lost over 6,000 young, single college educated persons. This means the State has spent time, energy and money on providing an educated workforce for other states.

Many young people are deterred from staying in the State of Connecticut because of the high cost of housing. Consumers in their 20s are more likely to purchase property at a younger age than their older family members. These individuals are not necessarily waiting for marriage or even a long-term relationship before becoming homeowners.<sup>4</sup> Single females represent the fastest growing segment of the home buyers market. The proportion of single women buying homes has increased, from 14% in 1995 to 21% while the single men make up 9% of buyers.<sup>5</sup>

The shrinking labor pool of young professionals and families may deter business from coming, staying or expanding in the state. Over the next 10 years the baby boomer generation will hit retirement age and Connecticut will face a shortage of skilled, educated workers. We support the creation of initiatives such as these to encourage young women to stay in Connecticut.

We look forward to working with you to address these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>2</sup> Diana M. Pearce, Ph.D. *Overlooked and Undercounted: Where Connecticut Stands*. Prepared for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, June 2007 – also source for self-sufficiency charts.

<sup>3</sup> HomeConnecticut.org.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.floridahomeloan.com/2006/09/younger-first-time-home-buyers-enter.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.realtor.org/rmodaily.nsf/0/ec9b3798c397dc42862571ea00594a7c?OpenDocument>